No 26 May 1985

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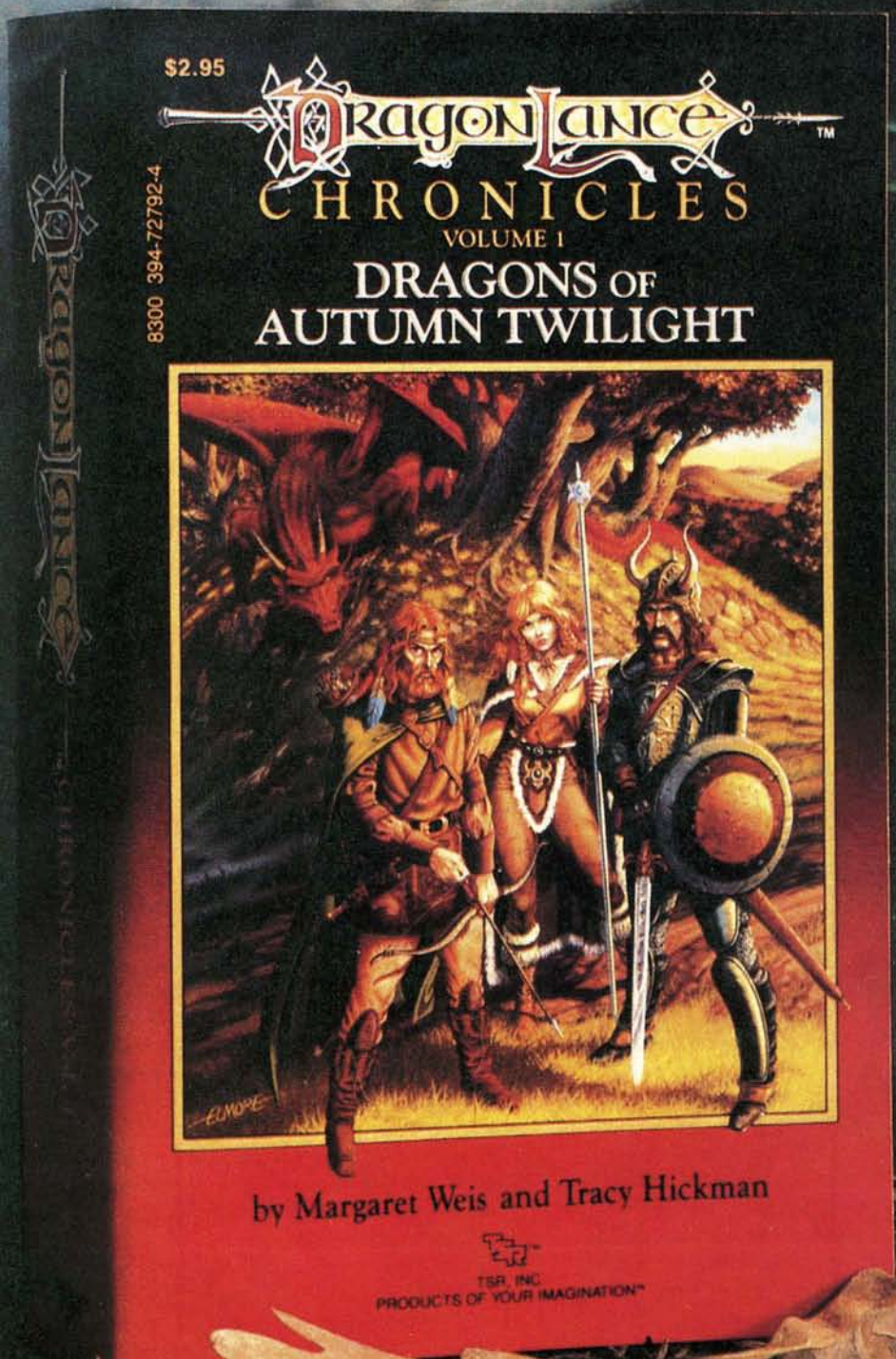

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IMAGINE™ Magazine

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..... **IMAGINE magazine, No 26, May 1985** .....
..... Published by TSR UK Ltd ..... Publisher **Don Turnbull** ..... Editor **Keith Thomson** .....
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Editorial

Once again, it's GamesFair time. The annual jamboree at Reading University sold out faster than ever this year, a sign of its increasing popularity. Now, of course, the rest of you can join in the fun, by playing **The Great Paladin Hunt**. This is the scenario that was used for the **AD&D®** Team Competition, and should provide you with two or three hours of entertainment. When he wrote it, Mike Brunton worked on the principle that it would be easier to judge the competition if there weren't too many surviving parties.

You'll have to see how you get on; see the report overleaf for some tips on how to avoid the biggest disasters achieved by GamesFair players.

Later in the year, you will also be able to play UK7 **Dark Clouds Gather**, which will bear some resemblance to the scenario used for the **D&D®** Open Competition. Last year's scenario — released as UK2 **The Sentinel** and UK3 **The Gauntlet** — made a big impact on the gaming public. Dark Clouds Gather comes from the same writing team; it should be a winner.

IMAGINE™ magazine is published monthly by TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. Telephone: (0223) 212517. Telex: 818761.

IMAGINE magazine is available from all good hobby shops and newsagents. It is distributed through the newstrade by Seymour Press Ltd, 334 Brixton Road, LONDON SW9 7AG. It is also available direct from the publisher by individual subscription. The subscription rate is £12 for twelve issues.

Back issues of IMAGINE magazine, where still available, can be bought directly from the above address for the price of £1.00 + 50p p&p per order — in the UK only. Overseas please enquire separately. Payment must accompany all orders. If one or more issues in an order are out of print, a credit note will be substituted which may be exchanged for cash or merchandise from the publisher.

The issue of expiration for each subscription will be printed on the subscriber's mailing label. Changes of address must be notified to the publisher at least 30 days before the effective change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

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IMAGINE magazine gratefully acknowledges the support offered by its sister publication, DRAGON® magazine, published by TSR Inc, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, USA. Articles appearing in IMAGINE magazine may have appeared previously in that publication.

GAMESFAIR '85

Reading University — 29th-31st March

GamesFair '85 was the best yet! Since it sold out in record time, perhaps this news is less than welcome to some of you, but 450 delegates, at least, indulged in more gaming than ever before. This year the harassed staff of TSR UK opened the proceedings even earlier, and *still* there were people waiting at the door when we arrived. Certain gamers were reported to have taken maximum advantage of this by staying awake during the entire 54 hours! Presumably there were lots of well-DMed zombies towards the end of the weekend.

GamesFair wouldn't work without willing delegates who run games for all the others. More people ran more rpgs — from **Call of Cthulhu** to **Runequest**, you name it — than in previous years, and there were plenty of boardgames to fill in those odd few hours.

The Team Competition Winners: SHADOW - featuring John Breakwell, Paul Ormston, Craig Cartmell, Henry Hippo (coach), Mark Byng and Jim Tolley

It's not the Winning, it's the Claim to Fame that counts!

The main activity started with the Team Competition, which suffered from a slight shortage of DMs (let's have a bit more commitment next year, you lot) and a severe dose of 'underkill' — there were far too many survivors! This was a severe disappointment to the designers, and made the judging difficult. Small wonder there was raging controversy! * *Key 10 Dungeons & Dragons Diabolos IIM* (phew!) were aghast to hear rumours that they had lost to *The South Hants Association of Down and Out Weregamers (SHADOW)* on the mere toss of a coin. Demanding to know the truth, they received an affirmative reply; but any fool can see the real reason is that SHADOW is so much more pronounceable! Yes, this was the year when we reminded everyone that role-playing is not about winning. It turned out that the Diabolos were really only worried about getting their picture in IMAGINE™ magazine, and they virtually held photographer John Aldous hostage until the shots were taken (see opposite).

Those sneaky players amongst you who are wondering how these teams scored highly probably want a few hints from the winners. The best teams got into the spirit of paladin-playing, dispensing with initiative rolls and offering the monsters the chance to 'strike a good blow first, sirrah; let's have your best.... and pray borrow my sword' but that's probably going too far. SHADOW suffered only one penalty when Craig Cartmell decided to leave a symbolic memento of the paladins' victory in one encounter: 'I nailed his head to the floor with my sword.' Their DM decided this was a little over-passionate and docked them a few marks.

The *Brighton and Bridge of Weir Barbarian Balrog Bashers* will be the first to admit that their paladin-play was a bit shaky. Even after the event they were still arguing but they eventually announced that Adam Todman was the person to blame. 'I kicked the gnome where it hurts' he claimed proudly, 'and I got killed while I was thumping a pile of rubbish.'

Another team got a free burst of fame when a film crew turned up to take a promotional film for TSR's marketing department. It made life a little difficult for them. 'It's a bit bright, innit?' they cried when the lights went on, and 'It's a bit dark now' when they were turned off. The apparently universal media assumption that role-playing involves dressing up and hitting people with wooden swords was painstakingly dispelled by the staff, only to be resurrected by the appearance of *Skullcrusher's Amateur Lobotomists* in full surgeon's gear, and a handful of others in chainmail wielding swords and axes. Another image-correcting campaign bites the dust....

The team names provided considerable fun before the event even started — it might be thought that *Union Carbide Safety Team (Retired)* bordered on poor taste, but we appreciated its topicality. Stirling University now has the distinction of producing, as well as excellent editorial assistants, the best- and worst-liked team names (neither of which are suitable for these pages, unfortunately!).

'Let's Go Crazy'

The highlight of the weekend was of course the Gary Gygax Seminar. At 7.30 on Friday evening a man who looked and sounded suspiciously like Don Turnbull appeared in the coffee bar announcing himself as the great ĘGG. Onlookers refuted this, in spite of the appearance of a trio of guys who looked like the bodyguards who accompanied Prince to the Record Industries award ceremonies a while ago, and the man was forced to confess that he was indeed DJT (the 'bodyguards' proved to be the Product Development team, Graeme, Jim and Phil, who write the UK modules). He explained that the real Mr Gygax had been unable to make it. Rumour had it that this was because he was adding the finishing touches to T2, but this is patently ridiculous.

It wasn't long before the inevitable question was asked, and 'Gary' explained that T2 been the subject of an **enlarge** spell and would appear later this year (no, really!) as T1-4, probably a hard-back book. In contrast, the bendy figures were acknowledged to be 'nothing to do with our hobby' and a few harsh words were said about some of the other recent trends in the industry.

In addition to the now infamous Matt Connell, there were a number of other people in the seminar who were concerned about the **Dragonlance** modules and the direction that modules seem to be taking. Most people seemed to appeciate that the UK module series was a sign for the better, and that there were people in the industry who wanted to make sure that experienced gamers got what they needed. Cartoons are one thing, but what about some decent adventures?

Don decided to ask a few questions of his own at one point, although it wasn't easy to find out exactly the information he was looking for. 'Who goes out and buys IMAGINE magazine?' he enquired, and a few hands went up. Someone then asked if going and buying included people who got their magazines on subscription. 'Alright,' said Don, 'who gets IMAGINE magazine, no matter what way?' That didn't do the trick either, and Don decided to change track and look for the guilty parties. 'Who doesn't buy IMAGINE magazine at all?' Up went the hands of all those who apparently take pride in their non-subscription to this magazine (they clearly don't know what they're missing!). Grinning most smugly was fanzine editor Trevor Mendham, but we weren't going to let him get away with that — he gets a copy sent to him free most months!

Friday Night and Saturday Morning

By now, of course, the weekend was in full swing. Most of the delegate-run games were under way, including one or two being given a trial at this event. Rumour has it that Francis Tresham, inventor of **1829** and several others, was harshly dealt with by some of those who came to play his latest.... 'You keep changing the rules — that isn't what you said last round.' David Watts had a very rough version of a game he is hoping to release later in the year, called **Big Steel**. 'It's going very well — people keep asking very awkward questions. I'll have to go away and think about this some more.' There was a noticeable downturn in the use made of the arcade games, although there was the usual plethora of injuries playing **Track and Field** (particularly to Ian Marsh's pride, eh Ian?). In fact it was a poor year for the microchip all round. The *Esso Games Society* had brought a micro along in the hope that they could speed up the processing of **En Garde** turns, but within a few hours they were frying eggs on the casing and back to doing things by hand. (See overleaf for some of the awards and the best piece of Press from this game.)

GamesFair is a great social event, and Friday concluded with people meeting up in the bars and lounges to put the world to rights — or at least to re-write the rules for just about every game system there is. Hardened fanatics were still *starting* games at 1.30 in the morning, and by the time all the TSR staff were tucked up in bed there were 200 or more people still playing in the main hall....

Some of these were probably among the small number who didn't get up early enough on Saturday morning to claim their place in the Open Competition. One or two of the DMs looked a little ragged, too. Chris Baylis stared at his table forlornly for a few minutes: 'there's something missing, I haven't got everything with me.' 'Dice, Chris?' 'Aha! Right, can anyone lend me a few of those....'

Continued overleaf ➤

Delegate Games:
(top right) David Watts discovers how the Norwegians would have fought the Peninsular War campaign
(bottom right) Alan Ovens disputes another of Francis Tresham's 'off the cuff' decisions
(below) Save The President finds another convert....

*Nearly The Best and The Worst of the Worst: (top) * Key 10 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Diabolos IIM: Stuart Hollinghurst, Sean Reid, Naïda Edmunds (reserve), Tim Stubberfield, Peter Kelly, Staffan Tjernström*

(bottom) Brighton & Bridge of Weir Barbarian Balrog Bashers: Andrew Miles, Adam Todman, Theo Bingham, Stuart Ray, Shorty, Stuart McMillan

Stirling University's Alcoholics Obvious Society: Phil Johnson, Stephen Corcoran, Paul Blundell, Fiona Wood, Chris Rothwell, Raymond McCulloch, David Taylor

One good idea: That's all it takes!

The Open Competition proved more than a little difficult — even those who took part in it will be waiting for the arrival of **UK7 Dark Clouds Gather** to find out all the bits they missed! This year, a separate room was used for all stages of the competition. Walking into the room was just like walking into an examination room at first — but things soon livened up once the event got started. Two things were noticeable this year; there were more women players represented in the first two rounds than ever before, and many of the players who normally progress to the later stages of the competition went out in the first round!

The Final, on Sunday afternoon, saw several players being very aware of the need for sound strategy, but the winner was by universal choice also the best role-player. And for the first time ever, the winner was a woman: Tracey Scourfield. Interestingly, this meant that the title was going back to Southampton, following Richard Williams' success in 1984 (he also made it through to the Final this year). However, Tracey is originally from the Swavesey area in Cambridgeshire, and was a member of the Youth Club there, which has a little bit of a connection with certain members of the TSR staff.... but before anyone cries 'Fiddle!', let Richard Williams start praising the winner: 'She was the only choice. She had a brilliant idea right at the end — no-one else was even thinking the same way.' Tracey agreed that one good idea can win the Final: 'It's all about making choices. If you can be seen to be offering good ideas when decisions have to be made, you must be in with a chance.' Tracey's decisive contribution shows that she isn't one of the hack-and-slay brigade, since she *talked* her way out of a dangerous situation while the rest of the party was trying to choose between a **fireball** or a massed charge....

Typically, the 'reserve' final was a less tense affair, and they progressed much faster than the actual Finalists. Everyone agreed that the scenario was very exciting, although it wasn't always easy for every character to play an active role. The designer, Jim Bambra, says next year's will contain all the bits that were missed by players this year....

The Finalists of the D&D Open
Back Row: Andy Faulkner (Third), Riccardo Abbate (Second), Neil Packer, Richard Williams, Charlie Braham
Front Row: Craig Cartmell, Tracey Scourfield, Steve Lansdale

Right: Tracey Scourfield, 1985 Open Champion

At six o'clock on Sunday, there were still players slumped around tables in the Main Hall, trying to complete just one more encounter before heading for the station. Only the threat of having to sweep up the collected litter of a weekend's gaming got them on their feet. Suddenly, everything went very quiet. All the TSR staff were standing beside the reception desk, wondering what had hit them, summoning up the energy for the trip back to Cambridge. A few late departees were still there, amongst them Jerry West, who stood in as a Team Competition DM at the last minute. 'Thank Goodness that's over — I'm exhausted.' No-one had the strength to tell him that we were already starting to plan next year's event, so we just piled him into a litter bin and left him there as a souvenir. I'm sure we'll see him, and many others from the 1985 GamesFair, back for another weekend next year. Book early!

GamesFair Report
by Kim Daniel and Paul Cockburn
Photos by John Aldous

EN GARDE!

*Once again the redoubtable Theo Clarke and Paul Evans ran a weekend of **En Garde** for the delegates at GamesFair. If anyone doubts that it is pretty hard work, just look at the state of them in the photo to the left, along with fellow Esso Games Society members Jeremy Searle and Paul Hanton. This year they generously made several awards to the players, including:*

The Player Achieving The Greatest Increase In Social Level: *Jo Proctor*
Players Of Highest SL At The End Of The Game: *Ray Cole/Paul Hanton*

And this was the best piece of Press:

Une lettre from le front (1675)

Ketty, mon petite chou fleur,

La vie ici est sheer hell. Rien, mais blood et musketballs. Le food est diabolique, mais avec plus de vin, c'est acceptable. Mon thoughts est seulement de tu, except when les musketballs whizz about mon tete, and j'espere revenir a tu, shortly.

Dans le meantime, keep away from les autres rouges sexual, et, remember, je t'aime.

Les hugs et les kisses,
Ray

PS Donnez-moi mes thermal underwear et woolly socks, s'il vous plait; il est tres brass monkeys ici.

Games Fair '85

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R1 To The Aid Of Falx (AD&D® game)
Falx the Silver Dragon needs a hardy band of adventurers to explore some caves near his lair, for the dark powers lurking in the caves have stolen five potions of silver dragon control. Can you penetrate the caves and recover the potions before sundown?

R2 The Investigation of Hydell (AD&D)
Slinks are clean, well cared for, happy, obedient semi-humans. They are protected by law, and owned by many a wealthy merchant. So why is High Cleric Mackurian suspicious? Can you find out what the slinks really are?

R3 The Egg of the Phoenix (AD&D)
In the lonely town of Northending, the Council has summoned the Paladin Athelstan to their aid. The fabulous Egg of the Phoenix has been stolen and hidden deep within the Negative Material Plane. It's also guarded by a real phoenix!

R4 Doc's Island (AD&D)
After centuries of strife between the forces of good and evil, the lost Holy Sword, Chrysomer, must be recovered. This legendary blade is now in the hands of Evil. This module can be played as a continuation of R3.

RPGA1 Rahasia (D&D® game)
The elven maid Rahasia is in great peril. A fate worse than death awaits her at the hands of the evil Rahib! The Temple of the Sacred Black Rock, the elves who tend it, and Rahasia's father and betrothed are in his clutches. Can you stop the Rahib before he brings ruin to all?

RPGA2 Black Opal Eye (D&D)
Three witches lurk in Elyas' tower. None of those sent to explore the place have returned. Two elf maidens have vanished without trace, and the elves' magic is failing. Now you must enter the tower and find out what lurks within....

RPGA3 The Forgotten King (AD&D)
A restless populace claims all has gone awry since the last King was deposed, two centuries ago. The Brothers of Brie have prophecied that a long-forgotten king will arrive in Pellham's hour of greatest need. Can you prove that this is the appointed time, and rouse the Forgotten King?

RPGA4 The Elixir of Life (AD&D)
The Kingdom of Pellham is in danger. Only the return of King Llwellyn can save the realm. Many arduous tasks must be performed before the great king can be resurrected — tasks you must perform!

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The Adventurers' Guild

A Training Course For All Members

(Price 50gp for One Lecture)

Your Instructor: Chris Felton

'Good afternoon, Guildmembers.

'Welcome to the first in a series of lectures on – as it were – the "tricks of the trade". You trainees will notice that you've been joined by the cream of adventurers from all the lands around, looking for new wiles. This brings me straight to my first point; no-one ever knows all the tricks of this business. I'd like to remind the experienced characters here that if you contribute an original stratagem to the Guild's files, I'll refund the fee you have paid for this course.

'Before we start today's lecture, does any of you own the griffon tied to the appletree in the garden? You, Ambrini – I thought so. Move it would you, so we can let the children from the orphanage play outside? Many thanks; I promise we shall not start until you are back. We can use the time profitably to deal with the small matter of those members whose subscriptions are overdue....'

Some people claim that all adventurers are crazy. However, you will find this rarely said in the presence of one of the dungeoneering breed, as we have a reputation of being.... touchy *(pause for laughter)*. Fortunately, it will always be easy for the ordinary man to recognise us, as we move about town in groups of six to ten, armoured, bristling with weaponry, ropes and odd pieces of equipment. I've heard some of you also tend to frequent the sort of public establishment where gossip is of a higher standard than the ale; this will also mark you out from the masses.

Another thing that will separate members of this Guild from the common herd will be the way you use the resources around you. This lecture is for the benefit of all you adventurers who have stopped to wonder what those pieces of equipment are that more experienced brothers tote around with them. I suppose, it might even be of use to a few of those brothers themselves, for some of the ideas and wrinkles in this lecture are just the sort of thing I've heard one group advise another during some drunken revelry. In other words, these are the tricks of the adventuring trade. I'm sure that when you have read just what a lot of paraphernalia and nonsense goes on in the name of 'epic quests', you'll wonder why you didn't decide to become a farmer or clerk instead.

For example: the definitive way to recognise an adventurer is to look around the neck. If you can see a coin blazing with light, or a pouch of some lightproof cloth, the wearer is sure to be one of us. That's one use one can find for **continual light**. A noble, or any decent citizen *(pause for catcalls)*, would have the spell cast upon a lantern to be carried by a linkboy, a proper sign of status. You, being entirely practical, have a less self-aggrandizing use for it. When 5th-level clerics can cast **continual light** without material cost, there's no reason why any of you should not have plenty of permanent lightsources about your person. And for those who have not such a cleric among them, Brother Ignatio will gladly sell you a spell or two on the way out.

The reason why it is cast upon a coin or a bauble about the neck is to keep both hands free. You will see some gaudy 'free-lance' types with **continual light** on a helm or torc to illuminate behind them as well; they will not be members of this Guild, I assure you. Larger sources of light are difficult to cover up when you want to escape notice. You've probably heard of magical swords glowing in the dark — this is not universally true, and since it is a complication in the enchanting process, few mages would actually bother to include it. Not even those painfully sincere paladins in the audience would want to be seen to be glowing all the time while they are rescuing underprivileged citizens, so a glowing sword is quite a drawback.

Using the spell in this way confers two further advantages. The items require no fuel or maintenance, and they will not ignite firedamp or wood in those underground lairs you prefer to frequent.

Those irritating glowing marbles the children outside were playing with, given by passing adventurers, are part of the same idea. Have **continual light** cast on marbles. When you want to find the depth of a shaft, or the contents of a deep alcove, drop in the marble. Anything would do really, but if the lightsource is small, light, and will bounce and roll, it can be thrown or slung a great distance with accuracy — a marble is ideal.

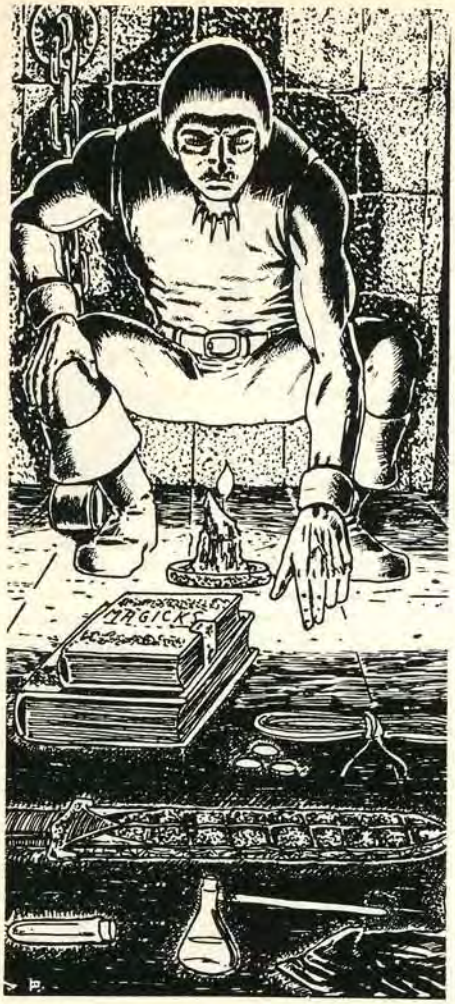
You should use marbles a great deal. As well as some that glow, you should have some to cast **silence** upon. Cast the spell before breaking down a door, and enter unheard. Next, toss the marble in amidst the defenders so that they cannot raise the alarm or cast spells themselves. It is a myth to believe that it is worth carrying them around to throw underfoot. You need far too many.

I've heard tell of magic-using types using great magicks such as **transmute rock to mud** to cause unsound footing. In addition to radically undermining the land above, this causes any creature crossing it to sink; these stout adventurers then re-solidify the morass using **dispel magic**. Some would say that this is ridiculous, that one cannot undo the magic of such a spell any more than one could un-**mend**, but there is always **mud to rock** (which accounts for the many changes to our watercourses and marshlands). Just as much fun can be had by casting **rock to mud** upon the ceiling, which shouldn't actually kill anyone healthier than a little old man, but ought to slow them down a bit.

Slowing opponents is always a good idea, and **slow** is possibly the best spell; certainly it is the most underrated. Do not hold the mighty **fireball** in awe — such magic has too much risk of blowback, and many say it is useless against fire-using creatures, and against devils, and that any opponent with a little intelligence will have obtained a **ring of fire resistance** to halt the spell's effects, or will have a **fire resistance** spell prepared. **Slow** picks out your enemies from your friends, has no risk of backfiring, and there is no saving against the effects. The only ways to avoid it are a **ring of free action** or **magic resistance**.

Magic resistance is the magic user's bogey-man. However powerful the spell, if the target resists the magic, it has

If you have an idea that might save the life of a fellow adventurer — or you could use some ideas yourself — the Adventurers' Guild is the place to go....



absolutely no effect. That is why we see everywhere the remains of indirect magicks. If you find a slab of iron in an unlikely place, it is probably the result of the casting of **wall of iron** in the air above a target. After all, even the smallest weighs over ten tons, and nothing that finds itself underneath will ever survive it. Even **wall of ice** would do, if it did not break up.

Then there is **enlarge**. If something can be enlarged to block the escape route the adventurers have passed, the monsters will have to find another way around. Or, in reverse, it can be used to remove obstacles. That five-inch-thick door may be held closed by fifty-odd bolts, but they won't do any good if they can't reach the doorframe.

A **wizard-locked** door might save against the effects of **reduce**, and all must know that a wizard-locked door is a formidable barrier to anyone except a magic user four levels higher than the caster. So, wizard-locking a door behind you on your way into a dungeon or fortress is a good idea, so that if you have to leave in a hurry, you can get ten to thirty minutes start while your pursuers break the door down. But don't get the caster killed in the meantime, otherwise you're going to be stuck down there yourself.

Using your opponents' doors against them might appeal to your sense of humour, but don't forget that all the defences of the room beyond will be ranged against the doors and windows. If you come in through the walls, it will give you a great tactical advantage. High level magic users can do this very easily with a **passwall, disintegrate** or rock to mud, but even a low-level group can go through walls with a third-level Druid to **stone shape** a new door.

Once inside, watch out for anti-burglar devices. Some are powerful and complex, some simple. The simplest of all is a bead curtain. It needs no maintenance, need not be avoided by guards, and cannot accidentally be set off. If an invisible intruder penetrates the door, it will show the fact. Of course, a bead curtain needs someone to observe it being moved, but a **magic mouth** could be set to scream 'Intruder!' if the curtain moves without visible cause. A pool of water can be used in the same way, and it is more subtle; it can look just like a natural puddle from a roof leak. Once again, an invisible character will be betrayed. So, adopt these precautions for your homes and watch out for them when you are running around somebody else's.

Remember, every magic user can spare one spell a week for defences, and a long-term wizard's base could be festooned with dozens of **magic mouths** to cover every possibility, running in chains to pass the alert to some central guard post. Explosive runes could be placed where the defenders never look — if the door has a Judas-gate, most parties will use it to check out the opposition on the other side. The gate can be false, covering explosive runes, and the party will be caught by it; the defenders, of course, never look through the gate. Similarly, if the defenders include an illusionist, the place will be littered with **illusory scripts**, which to any orc are just more 'No Smoking' signs.

On the other hand, a spell designed for anti-burglar use has found another purpose. A **glyph of warding** can cause all sorts of damage if the spell a cleric wishes to use on an intruder is cast in combination with the glyph. Normally, this requires the casting of the **glyph of warding** spell, followed by **cause paralysis, cause blindness** or **energy drain** (reversed **restoration**). But there is nothing to say that the spell effect must be hostile; what if the glyph is combined with **cure serious wounds**? These could be cast upon 'safe' wall areas, but it might be common for them to be cast on 'glyph books' — sheets of metal (since the glyph requires an inflexible surface of at least 2' x 3') with restorative spells cast on them. Since anyone touching the sheet sets the glyph off, the covers cannot have glyphs upon them, so a two-sheet book can hold two glyphs, or a three sheet book can hold four. There is only one drawback — each sheet weighs 6lbs, which makes it somewhat heavier than a standard **ring of spell storing**. And there are two spells which cannot be stored upon it — **raise dead** and **resurrection**, since only living creatures can be affected by a glyph.

Chris Felton

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Monstermark Revisited

by Roger Musson

Of all the articles about the **D&D®** games that I have read over the years, few have shown the same degree of original insight into the game as the three articles on the Monstermark concept, by Don Turnbull, which appeared in the first three issues of **White Dwarf**. For those unfamiliar with Monstermark, the idea is basically this — the creation of a system by which one can make an accurate assessment of the relative dangerousness of different monsters. By making a few simple calculations, one can come up with a single statistic which expresses how dangerous any monster is to the average adventurer. This is very useful for someone like myself who likes to compose new monsters to use in the game, for it enables one to find out exactly how lethal these creations are, and consequently how far down the dungeon to put them. It also permits re-assessment of standard monsters; in Don's original articles he found that some of the monsters were wildly misplaced in the original D&D monster level tables. Use of the Monstermark values permitted the construction of new level tables that more accurately reflected the strengths of the standard monsters. The Monstermark system is also very useful when it comes to calculating the appropriate experience point awards for killing monsters.

The actual system works as follows: imagine that a monster is being attacked by an endless series of first-level fighters, all in plate mail plus shield and wielding swords (ie AC 2, 1-8 per attack). They attack one at a time, and when one is killed, the next steps in and takes his place, until the monster is killed. How many hits, on average will the monster inflict on the fightingmen before it keels over? The first thing to do is to calculate how long it will last, in rounds, which is:

Average number of hit points/(probability of being hit x Average hits lost per attack).

The average number of hit points that a monster has is equal to its hit dice times 4.5; the probability of it being hit is dependent on its armour class, and the average damage it takes per hit is 4.5 (this is the average score from on a roll of 1d8). The average damage that the monster deals out per round is given by

Chance of hitting AC2 x Average damage done per hit.

You also need to take multiple attacks and/or alternative attacks into account here. Then the final result is

Average damage done x Average number of rounds lasted

and this is basically the Monstermark.

However, things are not quite as simple as that, since many monsters have special abilities, which make them that much more fearsome — level drains, paralysation, spell attacks, magical defences, and all the others. To reflect this, the statistic calculated above (denoted by the letter A) is modified by a special multiplier to yield the final Monstermark, referred to as M. So, for instance, a monster with paralysation abilities gets a times two bonus — or to put it mathematically, *M=2A*. For petrification the multiplier is 2.5, poison 2, magical attack/defence 1.5-3 depending on extent, strength point drain 1.5, level drain 2.5, etc.

That, briefly, is the original Monstermark system. For a while, all new monsters appearing in the **Fiend Factory** column appeared with their calculated Monstermark figure (the column was then being edited by Don) but now the system has fallen into disuse. This seems to me to be very unfortunate, and the object of this article is to put it back on its feet. There are one or two basic flaws in the existing Monstermark system, which are very easily put right, and I hope that these revisions will give Monstermark a new lease of life.

I should at this point mention the one case of recent work updating the system — the articles that appeared by Graeme Morris in the old **PA Newsletter**, which demonstrated how danger varied according to the number of monsters attacking at a time and the number of players attacking at a time. This is very useful for assessing experience point awards, but is peripheral to the basic concept of the Monstermark as a means of comparing different monsters.

The modifications proposed in this article I shall refer to as Revised Monstermark, abbreviated to RM (which also stands for something else). They originally arose in the course of conversations with Bob Luckin many years ago, but have languished unprinted until now.

The first problem is very evident: once you go high enough up the armour class table, you find that the poor first-level fighters can't hit the monsters at all, and M shoots up to infinity. This was dealt with in the original system by calculating M for the lowest level of fighter capable of hitting the beast in question. Trouble was, such figures were not comparable to the rest, and the consistency of the system broke down. The simple solution to this is to use a higher level of fighter in all the calculations. The choice of first level fighters was entirely arbitrary, and thus can easily be changed. I have chosen to base all my figures on a stream of fifth-level fighters, and this enables uniform comparison to be made of all monsters up to AC -9, which should be enough for most people.

So now we can start calculating a few examples of basic RM to serve as benchmarks to compare some more exotic beasts to later. And at this point I would recommend you to read Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 permits rapid calculation of how long a monster will last, in rounds, when attacked by our fifth level fighters, for any beast up to 10 HD and AC 0. The first row gives values for a single hit point, and these should be added or subtracted as appropriate for monsters with bonuses.

Thus a monster with 4 HD and AC 6 will last on average for 7.27 rounds, while if it had 4+2 HD and the same AC, it would last for *7.27 + (2 x 0.4) = 8.07 rounds.*

Table 2 gives the average damage a monster will hand out per round to an AC 2 opponent. Thus a 4 HD monster with one 1-6 attack will do on average 1.4 points of damage a round; if it had two 1-6 attacks or one 2-12 attack it would do double that.

So — our first example: the humble Kobold. With an average of 2.5 HP and AC 7, he lasts for 0.93 rounds on average, and attacking with one 1-4 blow he does on average 0.25 points of damage per round, which gives a final figure of 0.23 — not very powerful. Here are some more:

	AC	HD	attack	RM
Orc	6	1	1-8	**1.64**
Bugbear	5	3+1	2-8	**11.21**
Ogre	5	4+1	1-10	**18.57**
Hill Giant	4	8+1	2-16	**90.62**

So far so good, but also so not-very-different from the original Monstermark. Which brings us to the second fundamental problem of the original system. Consider the case, if you will, of the Fleeg. I hear you asking, "Pray tell, what the devil is that? In which Manual/folio/supplement/magazine/module does *that* appear?" Well, the answer is, in none; I am just about to invent it. The Fleeg is ... ah ... a large green hairy bat with a long pointed tail. It has 1 HD, is AC 7, strikes with its tail for 1-4 damage plus poison — the victim must save against poison or die. The Monstermark, not counting the poison, works out as 0.84. Poison gives us a times two multiplier, and the final answer is RM = 1.68. Only marginally worse than an orc. Myself, I don't believe it; I'd far rather face an orc.

Let's try another unofficial monster — the Gromble. This is, let me see ... a creature resembling a cross between a bluebottle and a hobbit. It runs very fast, and is a relentless pursuer once aroused. It has 1 HD, is AC 5, does 1-6 damage per hit, and can only be struck by magical weapons. Our basic calculations give a figure of 1.4, and with a 1.5 multiplier for magical defence, this goes up to RM = 2.1. Compare this with the Giant Gromble, which is basically an enlarged version of its smaller relative. It has AC 4, 8 HD, does 2-12 damage per strike, and again, is immune to normal weapons. This works out as 68.63 x 1.5 (for magical defence) = 102.95.

Again, I don't think these figures are an accurate reflection.The Gromble is not rated that much worse than an orc, yet a low-level party who met it (and it would be a low-level party that would have to face such a low-level monster) might well have no magical weapons to fight it with, and could be in trouble since they would not be able to outrun it. By contrast, the Giant Gromble, as far as its basic goes, is weaker than an ordinary hill giant, apart from its magical defence. Yet it has a significantly higher Monstermark. A party encountering a Giant Gromble, though, would almost certainly have magical weapons, and thus its magical defence would not count for much, and certainly would not be worth the extra points.

The problem, as you may by now have gathered from these examples, lies in the concept of a multiplier to deal with special abilities. A small initial value is always going to stay small when multiplied up, no matter how severe the special powers are (as in the case of the Fleeg); a big monster will have a big value, which will gain out of proportion for even a slight special ability, as in the case of the Giant Gromble.

So, in the Revised Monstermark system, the special abilities multiplier goes. In its place comes the concept of damage equivalents. The idea is to examine each special ability to see how much it aids the attack or defence, and build it in to the Monstermark calculation. In the case of attacks which have an effect not directly measured in hit points, a convention of damage equivalents is used. To start with the worst thing possible: consider a monster that killed outright on touch, with no saving throw. In the Revised Monstermark system, instant death is considered to be equal to 50hp damage, the maximum number of hit points a fifth level fighter may have. Thus a monster that killed on touch would be considered as doing 50 points of damage per hit, and its Monstermark value calculated on this basis. It may seem odd to use the maximum value rather than the mean number of hit points, but I think this is justifiable on the account of the severity of the attack — no chance to recover as there is with normal damage. Of course, saving throws must be taken into account if appropriate. If the victim of the death attack is allowed a saving throw, the attack strength drops to 25hp, since there is only a 50% chance of our fifth-level fighter dying from one blow.

Using the death attack as a basis, I estimate the damage equivalents of the other most common special attacks as follows:

Table 1: Average number of rounds monster survives, by AC

HD	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
(1hp)	0.32	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.44	0.49	0.56	0.63	0.74	0.8
1	1.43	1.54	1.67	1.82	2.00	2.22	2.50	2.86	3.33	4.0
2	2.86	3.08	3.33	3.64	4.00	4.44	5.00	5.71	6.67	8.0
3	4.29	4.62	5.00	5.46	6.00	6.67	7.50	8.57	10.00	12.0
4	5.71	6.15	6.67	7.27	8.00	8.89	10.00	11.43	13.33	16.0
5	7.14	7.69	8.33	9.09	10.00	11.11	12.50	14.29	16.67	20.0
6	8.57	9.23	10.00	10.91	12.00	13.33	15.00	17.14	20.00	24.0
7	10.00	10.77	11.67	12.73	14.00	15.56	17.50	20.00	23.33	28.0
8	11.43	12.31	13.33	14.55	16.00	17.78	20.00	22.86	26.67	32.0
9	12.86	13.85	15.00	16.36	18.00	20.00	22.50	25.71	30.00	36.0
10	14.29	15.39	16.67	18.18	20.00	22.22	25.00	28.57	33.33	40.0

Table 2: Average damage done per monster

		damage die				
HD	hit prob	1-4	1-6	1-8	1-10	1-12
½	0.1	0.25	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.65
1-1	0.15	0.38	0.53	0.68	0.83	0.98
1	0.2	0.50	0.70	0.90	1.10	1.30
1+	0.25	0.62	0.87	1.12	1.37	1.62
2-3+	0.35	0.87	1.23	1.57	1.92	2.27
4-5+	0.4	1.00	1.40	1.80	2.20	2.60
6-7+	0.5	1.25	1.75	2.25	2.75	3.25
8-9+	0.55	1.37	1.93	2.48	3.03	3.58
10-11+	0.65	1.62	2.27	2.92	3.57	4.22

Attack	Damage equivalent (no save)	(with save)
Death	50	25
Petrification	40	22
Paralysation	24	17
Level Drain	10	n/a

Poison is not included, since it tends to be handled differently by different DMs. If it is instant-death type poison, then the damage equivalent is the same as for death (the save is the same). Less virulent poisons are sometimes dealt with as straight hit point losses, in which case these values can be taken in the calculations, allowing for saving throws as appropriate.

This covers special attacks which require actual hitting. Gaze attacks are a bit different, and depend on how the DM handles such things. The rule books are vague on such matters. Most people I know handle monsters like the Medusa such that everyone in a party, on first encountering such a creature, makes a saving throw to see if the characters avoid making eye contact. Thereafter, they are assumed to be able to avoid eye contact for the rest of the encounter. In such an instance, the Monstermark would be calculated for the combat abilities of the Medusa, and then a single gaze attack added on to the result. Conceivably other DMs may require saving throws to be made more frequently, or give the Medusa an advantage in combat to simulate the fact that her opponent is studiedly looking at his feet all the time he is fighting her. Let's try the sums:

1st option — Medusa has 6 HD, AC 5, and thus will last for an average of 12 rounds. She does 1-4 + deadly poison per attack; the actual physical damage comes out to an average of 1.25 HP per round; the poison damage is 50 x 0.5 (saving throw) x 0.5 (chance of hitting) = 12.5 average damage per round. So the total average damage per round is 13.75. That means the average damage done by the Medusa's asp attack before she succumbs is 12 x 13.75 = 165. In addition, she gets one gaze attack for 40 points, which goes down to 22 when we allow for the saving throw, and so RM = 187.

2nd option — If the Medusa gets a gaze attack every round, the average damage she does per round is 1.25 (bite) + 12.5 (poison) + 22 (gaze) = 35.75. This over twelve rounds gives a final value of RM = 429. Very Nasty!

3rd option — The Medusa's opponent is carefully not looking at her, so he hits at -2. This makes the Medusa effectively AC 3, so she lasts for 15 rounds on average. This yields 15 x 13.75 + 22 = 228.25.

By contrast, using the multipliers of the original Monstermark system, we would have: average damage 1.25 x average rounds 12 x petrification 2.5 x poison 2 = 75. Which is very different. Furthermore, this could not easily be adjusted to distinguish between options 1 and 2 above.

Magical abilities must be taken individually. With regard to immunity from normal weaponry, I would maintain that the benefit the monster gets from this is much the same no matter what its other abilities are. In the case of the Gromble and Giant Gromble, the former only got an extra 0.7 added to its Monstermark, while the latter got over 34 extra. In the Revised Monstermark system immunity from normal weapons merits a bonus of 10 added to the calculated Monstermark. So the Gromble has RM = 11.4, and the Giant Gromble 78.63.

With regard to spell use, the way around this is to examine the spells available to the creature, see which will do the most damage in attack or be the most benefit in defence, and factor that into the calculation of the Revised Monstermark.

Let's now do some calculations for some more familiar monsters:

A few notes on this table: where a creature needs magical weapons of a certain quality to be hit, I work on the principle of 10 points bonus plus 1 for every plus needed to hit, so a creature that can only be hit by +2 weapons or better gets 12 points added on to the Revised Monstermark. And in case you're wondering, yes, I have seen +0 swords. With regard to creatures with multiple attacks, I have been going on the assumption that a monster will attack with claws or bite but not both per round — and I certainly don't believe that a gargoyle can butt and bite in the same round. However, if you play that a monster with multiple attacks uses all its attacks per round, you will have to recalculate the figures. And I leave it to you as to how you wish to handle monsters such as the chimera. For the harpy I have taken the charm to be slightly

creature	HD	AC	attacks	RM
basilisk	6+1	4	1-10 + gaze	**60**
cockatrice	5	6	1-3 + petrification	**87.26**
gargoyle	4+4	5	2 x 1-3 or 1-6 or 1-4	**23.88**
ghoul	2	6	2 x 1-3 or 1-6 + para	**27.71**
harpy	3	7	2 x 1-3 or 1-6 + charm	**35.44**
manticore	6+3	4	2 x 1-3 or 1-8 or spikes	**41.95**
skeleton	1	7	1-6 (special defence)	**1.50**
spectre	7+3	2	1-8 + level drain (x2)	**268.15**
wight	4+3	5	1-4 + level drain	**46.60**

less in effect than paralysation, at 22, or 11 with saving throw. The harpy's singing is not taken into account, since it doesn't have any effect on combat other than making it unavoidable. The manticore I assume to loose off one shower of spikes before its opponent closes — similar in effect to a gaze attack. The skeleton is assumed to be fought with a mace; if for consistency we assume our fighter to hit it with a sword, RM becomes 2.34.

Just looking at these figures, it is interesting to note that a cockatrice is actually more dangerous than a basilisk, since the latter has only one chance to petrify its opponent, whereas the former may paralyse with each hit. However, the same options are available with regard to the basilisk's gaze as were investigated for the medusa.

One thing not covered here is special weaknesses. It could be argued that something should be taken off beasts easily set on fire, like the mummy; however this is not strictly relevant to the definition of the Monstermark in terms of single combat with sword.

However, what is one to do in such cases as the carrion crawler? Assuming one is fighting it head on (AC 3), this beast has RM = 270.82. This is almost the same as a spectre! But as far as hand to hand combat goes this figure is justified. You try taking one on with a sword sometime, and see what happens to you. With eight attacks, any one of which could put you out of the fight if you fail to save, this beast really is frightening. However, no-one with a grain of sense actually goes around hacking these things with swords. If there isn't a friendly spell caster with **sleep** on hand, you run. But just because it is possible to send these critters to sleep, they are not as dangerous to a party as a spectre, even though they may be more dangerous to a solitary fighting-man. This is not a problem that is easy to resolve. Similarly, an undead creature that may be a nasty proposition for a fighter may be easy meat for a cleric to turn.

There are also one or two monsters which are quite hard to resolve still. Take the trapper, for instance — once this thing closes up on you, that's it unless you have friends on hand to rescue you. I tend to regard these beasts (and ochre jelly, grey ooze, etc) as traps more than monsters, and as such, I doubt if giving them a Monstermark is really appropriate.

One creature that really is a nuisance is the common or garden troll. This was no problem in the original D&D game, but in Advanced, the troll's rate of regeneration has been stepped up to 3 hit points per round; unfortunately, a single fifth-level fighter only deals out an average of 2.03 hit points per round against it, so in single combat the troll can only be killed if an improbably high number of good die rolls are made. Theoretically, the Revised Monstermark is infinite! One approach would be to redo the system using an 11th level fighter, who will deal out an average of 3.38 hits against a troll per round, for a net damage of 0.38 hp per round when the regeneration is taken into account. Even then the troll is going to take a lot of fighting before it's through, and the resulting RM, like that of the carrion crawler, will still be disproportionately high. Conclusion: trolls have got to be outnumbered or fought with magic.

At this point I shall leave off examples and lay my calculator aside. So many monsters depend on exactly how the DM likes to handle them that the RM will vary according to how multiple attacks are handled. The examples I have quoted already show that conventional wisdom about some monsters is not entirely accurate. In the tables at the back of the DMG, the experience awards for killing monsters give the basilisk 1000 + 8/hp, the cockatrice 315 + 5/hp, the gargoyle 165 + 5/hp, the ghoul 62 + 2/hp, and the harpy 145 + 3/hp. I would suggest that this is grossly overvaluing the basilisk, unless you give a gaze attack every round, and also overvalues the gargoyle and undervalues the ghoul. I would also maintain that, as far as my experience goes, comparisons made via Revised Monstermark bear out very well what is observed in actual play.

Now, dear reader, it is over to you. Get out that file you have marked 'dungeon specials', get out your calculator, and see just how dangerous all those new monsters that you keep in reserve really are.

Roger Musson

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The Gods of Pelinore

Introduction

The gods of Pelinore are numerous; some famous, some obscure. They live in their own plane and cannot leave it, but are able to project a tangible 'form' onto the prime material plane which might appear as a person, a creature or even an artifact. In this way the gods may interfere with day-to-day life. What is more, this is the only way the gods may interact one with another. The material form can be hurt or killed, but this has no effect whatsoever on the god, who can create another at will.

Different gods have different attitudes to clerics and followers. Some roundly ignore both, others interfere quite often. No god can control followers — those who choose to worship cannot be stopped; but the gods can force clerics to adopt certain standards, both in the shrines and outside them. For example, a god may insist that clerics and all worshippers must be neutral and will refuse to give the clerics their full quota of spells if non-neutral worshippers are admitted to holy places.

Name	Interest	Gods' Align	Clerics' Align	Changes to Clerics' Abilities	Clerics' Weapons
Abex/Sritinna	Charisma + Dominance	LE	Any E	For each point of Ch over 14, victim's saving throw vs **quest** or **command** is reduced by 1. Control undead at 1 level better than normal. Gain **hold person** as MUs as a power at 5th level. Cannot use **bless**, **chant**, **resist cold**, **resist fire**, **prayer** or **feign death**. Min Ch 15	May use whip
Csthenkes	Despair	N	Any	Only level 1 clerics	—
Dayleeh	Vigour	LN	Any L	Gain 1 point of constitution at 3/5/57/9 levels. Spend 4 hours every day in worship/training to gain spells (in addition to normal requirements)	—
Fealans	Pretty Things	N	Any	Must have been at least T3 before converting to cleric. Gain all detect spells one level earlier than usual	Leather armour only, no shields
Grea	Dissembling	CG	Any C	Immune to **detect lie**. Gain **change self** at 3rd, **misdirection** at 5th, **non-detection** at 7th level. Learn these as normal. May not use **augury**, **commune**, **divination**, **true seeing** or **know alignment**.	—
Green Man	Growth + Abundance	N	Any N	Must become moderately intoxicated before acquiring spells	—
Grunnundergron	Dwarven God of Mining	C	Any	Dwarves only — no special abilities	May use pick
Hrea	Dissembling	CN	Any C	see Grea	—
Mielsen	Romance	CG	Any non-E	No cure spells, gain detect/dispel spells 1 level earlier. Non-combative. If forced, fight at -5, lose all spells until forgiven	—
Onjura	Mourning	N	Any N	No cures, **resurrection** or **light** (**darkness** is available).	
Pharastus	Death	CE	CE	Turn paladins 2 levels better than normal. No cures or **resurrection**. When fighting at -4hp or lower, enter 'death frenzy' and fight on for 1-4 rounds at 2 attacks per round	May use edged weapons
Rissinis	Fishing	N	Any	Cannot **locate object** through earth or rock. No **stone tell** or **earthquake**	May use trident
Saith	Vengeance	LG	LG	No **raise dead**, **resurrection**, **regenerate** or **atonement**. **Cure disease** as Paladins upon reaching C3. Get **quest** as 3rd level spell	—
Tarmanel	Sky, air + weather	NG	Any non-E	No **stone tell** or **earthquake**. No **locate object** through earth/rock. Only 1st & 2nd level spells when out of sight of sky. Gain powers once per day as spells: **feather fall** at 3rd, **fly** at 6th, **control weather** at 11th level. No dwarves or gnomes	—
Trea	Dissembling	CE	Any C	See Grea	—
Urrumaa	Memory	N	Any	When 5th level may repeat any 1st or 2nd level spell already cast	—
Valbure	Swords	N	Any L or N	Minimum D 15. No **spiritual hammer**, all other spells gained 1 level later	Use swords only; non-intelligent

***Alignments Note:** All alignments are in Advanced terms. Basic players should assign appropriate alignments to the table above.*

Abex/Sritinna — god/goddess of charisma and dominance

Formerly a deity worshipped by sahuagin; now 'borrowed' by certain men. Followers can be of any alignment but are normally fighters.

This god values worship through deeds; the more others fear the clerics (all LE, Ch 15+), the higher they are in the god's esteem.

Abex/Sritinna never intervenes directly, but can offer advice on the best route to power. This must be obeyed or the god will slay the follower without a second thought. Always appears in male form (Abex) to females and in female form (Sritinna) to males.

Csthenkes — god of despair

Only those without hope turn to this god of pessimism and defeat. The clerics who serve him give up all hope of worldly wealth, achievement or progression and so remain forever at first level. Csthenkes never interferes in the prime material plane and when those whose final hour has come turn to him, he will accept their homage but do nothing.

Dayleeh — god of vigour

Dayleeh is worshipped in the civilised fleshpots of the Domains. Clerics value physical prowess and achievement as much as spirituality. Throughout the Domains, many Circuses and Arenas are dedicated to Dayleeh and those who compete there make ritual obeisance. Despite neutral alignment, Deyleeh ruthlessly demands that all clerics adhere rigidly to their regimen of physical activity. Even when adventuring, clerics of this god must put aside the required time to earn their daily spells.

Fealans — god of pretty things

By implication, also a god of thieves. Fealans is a great meddler in the affairs of Pelinore at a trivial level, appearing as a child or magpie.

Followers are normally neutral in some respect — Fealans is not an 'extremist'. They can be detected through their habit of carrying a painted tile with a likeness of a gem or some similarly valuable item. ▸

Temples are normally small. Although a target for other thieves and the authorities due to reputation for great wealth, they usually hold little of value as donations are spirited away to some secret location. This gives rise to further rumours of huge hidden hoards.

Clerics must once have been thieves. They disdain all armour and most other forms of clothing. Believers eschew all weapons except — in extremis — daggers (of the best possible quality).

Grea, Hrea and Trea — the dissemblers

Grea is the White Liar. She lies for fear that truth will hurt the hearer; she is invoked by lovers and others in matters of the heart. She is the patron, however temporary, of those who lie to help their fellows.

Hrea is the Grey Liar. She tells untruths and spins a web of deceit and illusion for no reason. She is capable of lacing her lies with a small dose of truth to give them substance. Hrea is far from malicious, she is simply indifferent to the fate of her fictions. Hrea is the sister invoked by musicians, poets or playwrights. She is also, as mistress of illusions, increasingly seen as a patron suitable for illusionists and diplomats; indeed all those who live by not revealing the whole truth.

Trea is the Black Liar. She lies to cause pain and deceive for ill-purposes. She is invoked in war by spies, diplomats, lawyers, the guilty and the cruel. Those who lie out of habit are thralls of Trea. Because of her black nature, her most devoted followers are sometimes unable to distinguish truth from falsehood even where it stares them in the face.

The sisters have a unified clergy, who profess to follow all three equally, though each wears the colours of their chosen Mistress of Untruth. Naturally, the Temples emphasise the worship of Grea and Hrea, while keeping Trea in her proper place — the darkness at the heart of the Temple and all lies...

Their temples thrive in a modest way as almost everyone tells lies — and feels the need to make donations so these are never discovered.

The Green Man — god of growth and abundance

The Green Man concerns himself with the plants and creatures of the natural, mundane world. He is interested in the produce of nature, especially that used in the making of beers, ales and wines. This is reflected by his symbol, the hop — foundation of the finest ales. He projects many guises (gardener, brewer, forester, etc) for his dealings with mortals amongst whom he favours the simple folk of the countryside. Known by many regional names (the Green Man, Barleycorn and Mother Nature's Son are but three), he is called upon by peasants and smallholders dependent on the whims of nature to increase their crops and to help them celebrate harvest in the manner that only he can.

His love of living creatures is broadcast by his songs. Many and beautiful they are! These songs are his peculiar magic and he uses them to encourage life to grow and prosper to his will. The Green Man is rarely found without a song on his lips and never without one in his heart.

The Green Man has few permanent worshippers. Some, however, choose him as their patron deity, although he takes little interest in them and will only influence the spheres of natural abundance. His clerics must become moderately intoxicated before sleeping in order to regain their spells. Many druids respect him.

Grunnundergron — dwarvish god of mining

Grunnundergron is the god dwarves look to for maintaining safety in the mines. Although he now has been given full responsibility for all mining activities by his followers, his origins were much more specific. He was originally the Net god, who caught dwarves who mined too deep and fell through the underside of the earth.

Mielsen — god/goddess of romance

Mielsen has temples in every major town or city and occasionally in unexpected locations. These take the form of open gardens bestrewn with flowers and shady walkways, often with a complicated maze leading to the shrine. Worshippers are expected to bring something of beauty as a love token; a painting, fine fabrics or jewels are most usual.

Clerics perform marriages, birth ceremonies and record oaths. They also brew love philtres, but only to administer to two willing parties.

Onjura — the Weeper, goddess of mourning (and departures)

Onjura is not a goddess of death, nor is she connected with the afterlife. It is her function to watch over the journey of the soul from the world to its final destination, wherever that may be. Onjura is also the goddess of mourners, although she gives no comfort, save the knowledge that the dead will be cared for — at least for a little while longer.

Onjura's clerics officiate at funerals (usually in addition to clerics of whatever god the deceased worshipped) and gather temple funds in payment for their services at this ceremony. Servants of Onjura dig graves and maintain graveyards and extract a toll from relatives for doing so. They also act as "professional mourners" when required, weeping and wailing over the corpse. It is not unusual for wills to include a small sum set aside for this and it is believed that for truly massive donations Onjura's clerics will provide surrogate wives, husbands or concubines to be thrown onto funeral pyres, if this is required.

Onjura is often invoked before taking leave on journeys. Small statuettes of the goddess may be placed at the mouths of harbours, next to outside gates or doors, or on headlands (where she can watch the departed ship for the longest period).

Pharastus — god of death

As god of death and all things evil associated with death, Pharastus is not worshipped publicly at all. Indeed, were it not for his æons old hatred of Tarmenel, his name might never have arisen above the low murmurings of his evil acolytes. As it is, following his persecution of Tarmenel's priests, Pharastus is not only well known as the god of killing, murder, mutilation and mayhem, but his name has become synonymous with all of these things.

None will ever admit to worshipping this god and no cleric will ever confess to following him. However, secret, evil shrines exist throughout Pelinore and it is safe to assume that any town of any size will have some vile reminder of this deity.

Rissinis — god of fishing

Worshipped widely throughout the Domains, Rissinis intervenes most regularly to save the lives of worshippers threatened by bad weather or other misfortune while fishing at sea. Clerics are drawn from the ranks of the saved, and operate a simple religion based on the observance of obscure rituals rather than spell-casting.

Saith the Protector — vengeance-giver of law

Saith is a violent god at times, but compassionate. In his aspect as a warrior he is favoured by paladins, who make up the bulk of his followers. In his peaceful aspect he is a healer, especially of plague and pestilence; a bringer of plenty after famine; the ender of pain and strife.... The common populace often turn to Saith for deliverance in times of siege or plague.

Those clerics who do follow Saith are men and women of a scrupulously lawful and good nature. They are the ones who serve the god in his peaceful aspects, bringing succour to those who suffer — and collecting tithes for doing so. The warlike aspects of Saith are served by paladins, for whom his vengeance taking on the forces of evil are seen as the model for paladin-like behaviour. Nevertheless, such actions must always be just and needful, not simply gratuitous and wanton destruction.

Tarmenel — god of the sky

Tarmenel, who holds sway over the sky and thereby the quality of air that is breathed and the weather that controls so much of life, is a god known throughout Pelinore. In the days long before history, there was a tacit agreement between the gods not to interfere with the prime material plane, but Tarmenel could not resist aiding a particular idyllic group of sheep-herders to a position of authority and power. Albeit this power was benign, the other gods did not approve. Only Pharastus dared intervene and he made it his business to wreak havoc wherever Tarmenel's influence stood. Eventually Tarmenel withdrew from daily interference, but his worship has thrived and lived on. Many look to Tarmenel for aid, not least those who depend upon the weather (adventurers and sailors, in particular), for success.

Urrumaa — god of memory

Urumaa, although famed throughout the Domains and beyond, is a god with many followers but almost no clerics, shrines or temples. As a god of memory he is frequently called upon, but rarely worshipped.

Some say he is the father of the gods but others deny this, ferociously maintaining that 'she' is their mother. Whatever the truth, Urrumaa is considered ancient, even amongst those to whom age is almost meaningless.

Urrumaa has never interfered on the prime material plane.

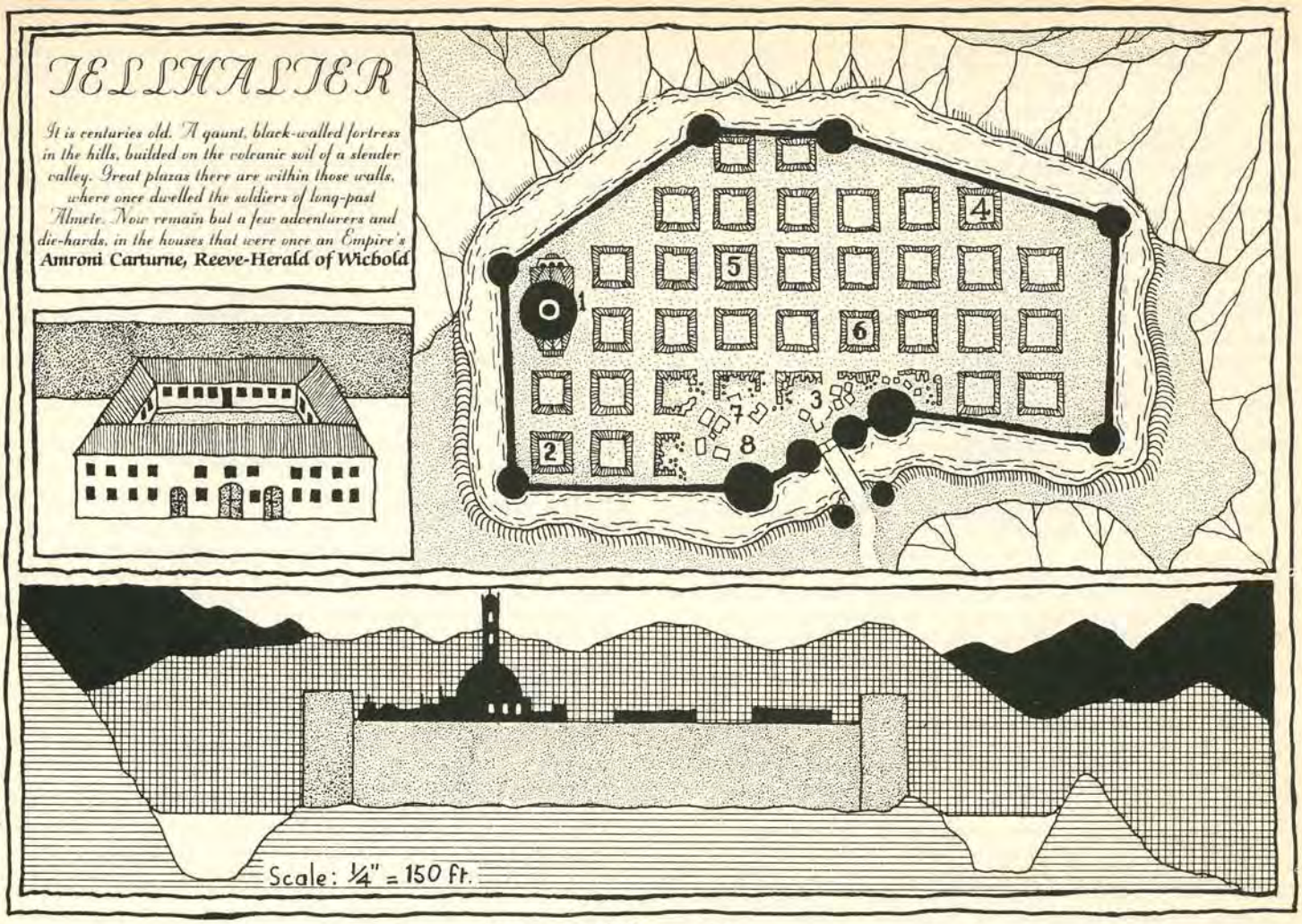
Valbure — god of swords

Valbure is the god of swordsmiths and sword users, although rarely worshipped to the exclusion of other gods by his followers. He is, however, invoked by many of those involved in the manufacture of weaponry and armour, whether to lend his strength to what is being made (in the case of swords) or to withhold his vengeance from those who dare to create armour and other, meaner weapons.

Valbure is also invoked by those who use swords professionally, both to ward off misfortune and to wish it upon the opposition ("Valbure, may his knife chip and shatter"; "Valbure, give my swordarm strength", etc).

Clerics of Valbure are martial folk, who set up permanent shrines where they worship and dedicate swords to the god (usually enchanted weapons of some type). These temples also provide protection for their localities in the form of skilled and armed swordsmen, and training for all those willing to worship and donate tithes. The clerics are well respected by most secular authorities for they do not proselytize, but do provide a solid military cadre and weaponsmiths.

Valbure's clerics hold meteors to be especially holy and will pay good prices for meteorites, as the iron in them is often of the finest quality and the "skymetal" is believed to have fallen from Valbure's own anvil.


TELLHALTER
It is centuries old. A gaunt, black-walled fortress in the hills, builded on the volcanic soil of a slender valley. Great plazas there are within those walls, where once dwelled the soldiers of long-past Almete. Now remain but a few adventurers and die-hards, in the houses that were once an Empire's
Amroni Carturne, Reeve-Herald of Wicbold
1
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Scale: ¼" = 150 ft.

Tellhalter

Of all the towns and villages in Cerwyn, Tellhalter is the most removed. In fact, it is dubious if it is in Cerwyn, since it is a self-governing Free Town beyond the recognised boundary of the Countess' authority.

But for adventurers, Tellhalter acts like a magnet. Barely two leagues away is the road that leads from Wicbold to the Cirbell Pass and thence to the Steppes — as clear a route to fame and fortune as one could ever find. Somewhere in the mountains above the pass is the fabulous City of the Mages — or so men say. There are no maps, nor records to show what might be found in the forested peaks, not a morning's ride away....

Tellhalter is an adventurer's town where danger lurks in every street and no-one is to be trusted. So few of the inhabitants have any regular form of income, that from the moment newcomers set foot within the walls, every possession must be guarded.

The Village

Tellhalter is a fortress, built in the time of the Empire of Almete, and its black walls are centuries old. It perches on the saddle of a narrow pass, on an ill-kept path. One gate breaches the wall, and a further bastion guards the bridge across the moat. Once, 20,000 men — or others —were quartered here, but there are only 300 inhabitants now, mostly humans. All of the buildings are made of the same black stone as the walls, dragged from who knows where. The dominant feature is a huge block building, with a slender tower rising into the sky, whilst no other building rises higher than two storeys. The rest of the fortress is occupied by the plazas of domestic buildings the current citizens inhabit. The orderly plan is marred only in the Gate Quarter, where extensive damage has been shoddily repaired. In this area are a few inns and businesses. Other areas are claimed by individuals or adventurer parties, squabbling over precedence. The atmosphere is sullen and foreboding.

People

Although the population is nominally 350, since at least 200 of these are of the adventuring persuasion, as many as 100 can be out of town at any time. The DM should record the comings and goings of those adventurers the PCs have dealings with, but should make it very difficult for the PCs to discover that information. Tellhalter is a very secretive place and one with no police or militia.

Money changes hands grudgingly in the fortress, and there is little outward show of wealth. The traders charge extortionate amounts for every necessity (five times the listed amounts), but the shops and stalls see customers rarely. Freshly returned adventurers may have a large cache of money, but it will be difficult to spot.

Among the leading lights of Tellhalter are a number of NPC parties. The DM should encourage the players to believe that their characters will be in competition with these for what commissioned work there might be — and that there might be times when they will be hired by opposing sides in a dispute. Life comes cheaply in a place such as this.

CT1 The Temple of Mordrenn: Everyone in Tellhalter visits this place eventually; it is the only public temple in the fortress. The huge Hall behind the main doors is three storeys high, and from galleries at the top there are access stairways to the tower, where only the priests of Mordrenn may tread. There are 19 priests (C9, C7, 2x C6, C5, 3x C3, 10x C1; all CE; plate and shortswords; spells as standard — emphasis on defensive, reversed curative and those that allow them to move unnoticed and take prisoners) besides Sairin. Only the 9th-, 7th- and 1st-level clerics are active adventurers, out 30% of the time. The 6th-level clerics officiate at the Ceremony of Servitude on each Avannday, and all the clerics perform the necessary devotional duties.

Mordrenn is an ancient deity from the time of the Almete Empire, wherein he was a God of Love — known romantically as the Heart God. The cult died out, but Sairin has revived it, twisting it to her own purposes. When she discovered the temple, she believed Mordrenn required the sacrifice of young men and women, to obtain their hearts. This has perverted Mordrenn himself; without followers he knows he could no longer manifest himself in physical form. He scours the streets of Tellhalter in the guise of an old man (**CT8a**) looking for a cleric who might restore the true nature of his religion; he promises very little in return, hoping to find someone who will help him in the name of love.

For now, Sairin's is the only openly-operating religion in Tellhalter. She maintains that she is Priestess for a deity worshipped in Kosre whose province is reincarnation. There are few who disbelieve her. Most of the victims she requires are brought in secretly by her acolytes who prey on the hamlets of eastern Cerwyn, but when short, she has been known to pluck victims from the very streets of the fortress....

CT1a Sairin Vertrille; High Priestess of the God Mordrenn
F; C16; CE; AC -1; hp 68/64; S 15, W 15, D 15, C 14; uses matched **shortswords +3**; **plate mail +4**; **helm of teleportation**; **ring of invisibility**; **Hand of Mordrenn**.
Whence Sairin comes, or when, no-one knows. In fact, she is 45 years old — though she was born at the very death of the Almete Empire! She was magically suspended by the clerics of a Religion of Warriors and Death and was only restored by the intervention of another cleric, Corvet of the Glaive, some twenty summers ago. He is now dead, and the secret died with him. He left Sairin behind, dwelling in the tower above the disused temple, where she discovered manuscripts relating to Mordrenn that allowed her to commence her evil religion. Now, all she lives for is the opportunity to extend her dominion. Any attempt by a cleric to found another religion, or to restore Mordrenn to his true faith, will be met with all the resources at her command.

Sairin uses her two matched, magical shortswords with great skill, although she is not genuinely two-handed. The **Hand of Mordrenn** is an artifact she compelled the god to fashion. It is a glove of silvered steel that stores a staggering amount of electrical power. If she lays hands upon another being, they will take 8d8 points of electrical damage; the glove may also be 'fired' as a **wand of lightning** three times a day, or at will on Avann-day. Only Sairin may wear it. Any other being that tries to don it must save vs wands or take a shock equal to the full stored power of the glove — 18d8. After such an occurence the glove will be powerless until the next Avann-day; only Mordrenn may alter its power.

CT2 Cord's Home: A part of one simple plaza houses one of the more famous sons of Cerwyn, Cord of Dahn. An adventurer for 40 years, he was the leader of the famous Red Gauntlets, a band that roamed the Domains. His home is poorly furnished and offers barely 130gp in treasure, although there are ten locked, trapped chests around the building, testimony to former grandeur. All are now empty.

CT2a Cord of Dahn; Adventurer
M; F16/R16; LG; AC -1; hp 60/74; C 15 (6), Ch 17; uses **longsword +5/Holy Avenger longsword**, a **crossbow +2** and a **shield +3** (Advanced Only: spells memorised usually curative, defensive and animal-related)
Cord is virtually impoverished. Having accumulated wealth estimated at over a million gold pieces in a long career, he retired, passing most of his magical goods to trusted lieutenants. Then, a terrible illness nearly slew him, and only a series of costly clerical spells halted the decline. He was left weakened, so that for every hour spent adventuring he will lose one point of constitution, down to a minumum of 6. He has come to Tellhalter to reform the Red Gauntlets, and will recruit any willing Lawful PCs. However, he aims high, and already one group of seventh-level adventurers has fallen at his side. He will extract an oath of loyalty from all who join him; who knows to what adventure it will lead them.

CT3 The Corin: A network of alleys near the Gate Quarter. An independent Thieves' Guild, operated by Jarda Whitehand, is established here, among the semi-destroyed buildings. The blocks are riddled by tunnels, secret doors and underground passages that only Jarda knows completely. Trying to track down an individual could be next to impossible. About 30 Thieves live here, in near poverty; drawn by the lure of 'easy' pickings on the frontier. Each will be T1-4, AC 4, armed with throwing daggers and shortswords.

CT3a Jarda Whitehand; Thieves' Guildmaster M; T16; CN; T16; AC 4; hp 54/62; D16; uses shortbow and poisoned dagger
Jarda is using Tellhalter and the thieves who dwell there as part of his design to become a great Guildmaster in the City League. Whilst maintaining an air of incompetence and poverty, he has located a vault, hidden in a maze of tunnels below the Inn of White Bells, and known to him alone. There he stores the loot he has accumulated — a staggering haul of over a quarter of a million gold pieces in gold, platinum and gems, and a number of art treasures which might double that sum. The vault is so well hidden and defended that no-one has ever managed to penetrate it; Jarda trusts nobody. One additional quirk in his nature is that he also has no faith in magic, and will never employ magical items against even his worst enemies.

CT3b Shmettling; Jarda's lieutenant
M; T10/A10; NE; AC 1; hp 40/40; S 17, D 17, Ch 17; uses black-bladed **blade of venom +4**, wears **leather armour +4**.
Shmettling is a frightening individual, utterly immoral. He is Jarda's assassin, and kills without compunction. He has no motive for staying in Tellhalter — he is not enjoying any of Jarda's wealth — but since he gets so many opportunities to practice his art, he has never thought of leaving. Any threat the PCs pose to Jarda, and Shmettling will begin his work....

CT3c Croan; Fence
M; Fr3; N; AC9; hp 12; wears **helm of teleportation**
Croan appears to be independent of Jarda's Guild, but is utterly under his control; this halfling's wife is being held prisoner by a confederate of Jarda's in the League. It is through Croan that Jarda accumulates his wealth. The fence is a skilled manipulator of men, and pits individual party members against each other. Thus he will offer one 1000gp for an item worth three times as much, but with the bonus that he will tell the rest of the party that the item is next to worthless. He then takes the items and sells them in the League, and brings the money back to Jarda. This journey occurs every month, and is made in the greatest of secrecy.

CT4 Cartennsen's Plaza: Even by Tellhalter standards, the goings-on in this part of the fortress are shrouded in secrecy. Those watching the building at night have noted strange smells upon the air and lights in the sky. Most people avoid the place.

CT4a Cartennsen; Wizard
F; MU16; L/LN; AC 2; hp 46; I 18; wears **bracers of defence AC2**, uses **wand of fireballs/wand of fire** (8 charges); **medallion of ESP 30'**.
Cartennsen gave up active adventuring five years ago, to take up experimentation in enchantment. One particular experiment has gone dreadfully wrong, and a ferocious demon is now contained within a chamber, held only by Cartennsen's magicks. While she has little difficulty in keeping the demon contained under normal circumstances, on approximately one night in ten it tries to break free, and she has to fight it. If anything happens to break her concentration on such a night....

CT5 The Plaza of the Medusa Legionnaires: This houses one of the NPC adventurer parties inhabiting Tellhalter. The Legionnaires are a noisy, quarrelsome group of chaotics, not particularly malicious, who use the fortress as a base. They will only be in residence 20% of the time, and normally carry a variety of wounds and ailments when at home. They rarely have any money, even after adventures; their first port of call is always Alnedius' (**CT7**). When first encountered, the party consists of F6, C5, MU5, F-MU4, F4, T4, C4 and F3 — there is a 50% chance of 1-3 of them failing to return from one of their forays.

CT6 The Patricians: A tiresome bunch of neutrals, much depleted by over-ambition. They are in residence just 10% of the time, and have another home in the City League. They are more inclined to be evil than the Legionnaires, and are more successful at holding on to money. They might have d100 x 100gp in their block at any one time, although their enormous appetite for fine wines usually evaporates whatever money they do find. The party currently consists of T8, F7, F7, C6/Dr6, but they could easily just fail to return one day.

CT7 Alnedius' Club: A squalid gambling den, inn and bordello, where the rowdy adventurers of Tellhalter generate the only truly regular income: Alnedius'. Prices are 5x normal, and the quality is lousy; but it's the only game in town.

CT7a Alnedius; Club-owner
M; T6; N; AC 5; hp 18/24; D 17; uses poisoned daggers, poisoned swords or just poisons the wine....
Alnedius doesn't intend to stay in Tellhalter long. With the money he is raking in, he can buy a proper club in High Lygol or even the League, and be respectable. For now, he just sits back and rakes it in. The club has been robbed every week or so for the last ten years, but he doesn't mind.... his three savage guard dogs have killed two men for every gold piece that has ever been taken.

CT8 The Gate Quarter: Food, drink and most perishables can be bought from the stalls in the 'market', but at 5x times normal prices. All other goods can be imported at double the cost again. These factors ensure no-one does business with the traders of Tellhalter unless they are really desperate, and why larceny is the cause of more money circulating than trade. There will be 1-6 traders, 2-12 T1-2s and 5-8 beggars here at any time.

CT8a The Old Man/Malsenn; deity
M; Fr1; AC 10; hp 1; S 4; Ch 4; no visible weapons or means of defence
The only way Malsenn can manifest himself upon this plane is in the guise of a pathetically weak, diseased old man. He waits in the Gate Quarter for newcomers, and will badger clerics for aid, along with three or four other beggars. He doesn't want money though. Instead he will beg them to restore the true religion of Malsenn. He will, if anyone will listen, relate the story of the malicious twist the worship of Malsenn has taken; everything, in fact, but his true nature. Should anyone mistreat him, he will appear again the first time that person is alone, and lay a **curse**. The person will then be left with an effective charisma of 3; surely to be reviled by everyone and everything until the inevitable end.

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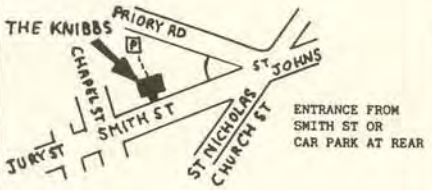

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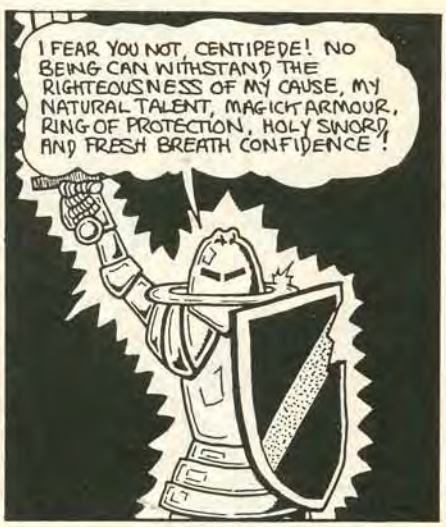
Rubic of Xoudon

WAIL! HOWL!
FEAR NOT, FOR I SHALL FREE THEE, SWORN AS I AM TO AID THOSE IN DISTRESS!
THIS IS THE PLACE — IT REEKS OF NECROMANCY!
ACME BRAZEN DOORS
BOOT

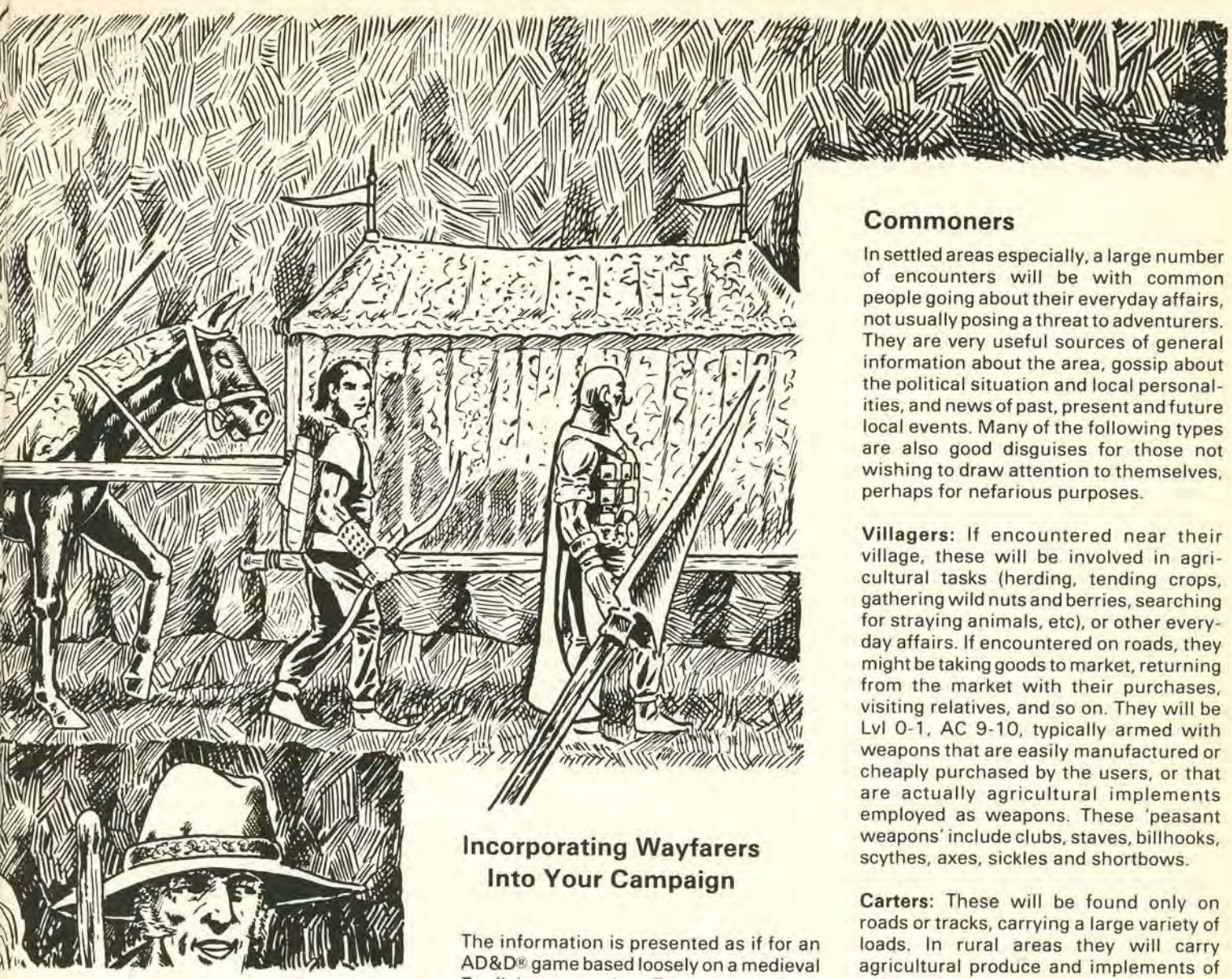

I FEAR YOU NOT, CENTIPEDE! NO BEING CAN WITHSTAND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MY CAUSE, MY NATURAL TALENT, MAGICK ARMOUR, RING OF PROTECTION, HOLY SWORD AND FRESH BREATH CONFIDENCE!

THE END?

The sort of people you might meet on the road in the D&D and AD&D games

Fellow Travellers

by Paul Vernon



Incorporating Wayfarers Into Your Campaign

The encounter tables in the **DMG** and **FIEND FOLIO** tome of the **Advanced** game, and the **Expert Set** of the **Basic D&D®** game are very limited where fellow travellers are concerned. The dozen or so types of men listed lack variety, and soon become predictable. This isn't important — perhaps — when the only travelling is between unrelated dungeons, but where they are used to generate encounters in campaign play, the tables soon prove to be inadequate.

One of the best things about playing in a well-run campaign is that you can almost believe that the place actually exists. Unfortunately, when the only people you meet on the road are patrols, robbers, merchant caravans, rootless tribesmen and bands of pilgrims heading towards unknown shrines, that illusion is soon shattered. Where's everybody else?

My own campaign is loosely based on merchant England, and its roads are mostly used by the type of traveller one would expect to have found there. A selection of these types are listed under the five categories below.

Most of the material in this article was gleaned from various history books, particularly **English Wayfaring Life In The Middle Ages** by J J Jusserand.

The information is presented as if for an AD&D® game based loosely on a medieval English type setting. To convert to D&D mostly requires just the adjustment of Armour Class by -1, and, in some cases, the hit points.

To convert to a setting like **Pelinore** requires mostly just common sense. There are more characters involved in the adventuring professions in Pelinore, and more ordinary people with some professional abilities, like Pick Pockets or a little simple magic. The DM might wish to adjust the tables to reflect this. Regardless, the DM should be prepared to ignore a particular roll if it does not seem to fit the circumstances; entertainers in the Theocratic Principalities might be one such case.... Lastly, the DM should adjust the status of most of the non-professional classes from NM/FO to Freeman, setting the appropriate level.

Lastly, the commonest fault in dealing with these kinds of encounters is that the DM feels the need to make them all 'worthwhile'. Every peasant knows a thing or two about the Forgotten City — that sort of thing. There is no point in adding variety to the type of person encountered only to allow the interaction to remain the same. Try to disguise information, to make it as ordinary as the normal babblings of normal people, unless you really need to get the point across.

Commoners

In settled areas especially, a large number of encounters will be with common people going about their everyday affairs, not usually posing a threat to adventurers. They are very useful sources of general information about the area, gossip about the political situation and local personalities, and news of past, present and future local events. Many of the following types are also good disguises for those not wishing to draw attention to themselves, perhaps for nefarious purposes.

Villagers: If encountered near their village, these will be involved in agricultural tasks (herding, tending crops, gathering wild nuts and berries, searching for straying animals, etc), or other everyday affairs. If encountered on roads, they might be taking goods to market, returning from the market with their purchases, visiting relatives, and so on. They will be Lvl 0-1, AC 9-10, typically armed with weapons that are easily manufactured or cheaply purchased by the users, or that are actually agricultural implements employed as weapons. These 'peasant weapons' include clubs, staves, billhooks, scythes, axes, sickles and shortbows.

Carters: These will be found only on roads or tracks, carrying a large variety of loads. In rural areas they will carry agricultural produce and implements of all kinds (from dung to grain, and ploughs to millstones), either in service to a lord or on their own account. Alternatively, they could be connected to some local 'industrial' enterprise, such as mining, quarrying, or working a claypit, and such cases they will be carrying appropriate materials. In less peaceful areas, the carriers of important produce might even be accompanied by men-at-arms. Carters will be mostly Lvl 0-3, AC 8-10, typically armed with 'peasant weapons' or daggers.

Wandering Labourers: can either be poor townspeople supplementing their meagre incomes by taking agricultural work at certain times of the year (especially during harvest) or peasants out of bond who have deserted their former masters or fled from famine, war, flood, disease, banditry, inroads by monsters, or some other catastrophe that drove them from their home. Some lords see them as unwelcome troublemakers, as they often spread discontent, and they in turn can be very suspicious and insular. Their stats will be the same as for the villagers.

Beggars: can be wandering labourers who have been unable to find work, or professional beggars with some real or feigned disability. Solitary hermits begging alms from passers-by were fairly

common in medieval England and can also be included in this class. Often they lived near bridges or small shrines, and begged alms ostensibly for their upkeep. They can be a good source of local wisdom — for a price. Finally, wandering holy men can be found preaching by the road side, or anywhere else they can find a congregation. A favourite place for these (usually good and/or chaotic) zealots to preach is in the grounds of Lawful temples on holy days after services, so that they can harangue temple-goers as they leave. Naturally, they are also seen as trouble-makers by the authorities. All beggars are Lvl 0, AC 10, and can defend themselves only with club or staff.

Common Hunters: These commoners are found hunting as a livelihood, rather than for pleasure as nobles do. In settled areas they will be hunting deer, boar, wolves or fur-bearing animals, some of which will be reserved by the local aristocracy for their own sport. In these circumstances, common hunters will be fighters or thieves of Lvl 1-4, AC 7-10. They will be equipped with various weapons from those available to peasants; also spears, swords and longbows might be available to some to hunt the more formidable quarry.

In the wilderness, hunters might go after the more exotic species, in some cases trying to capture monsters for sale to menageries, nobles or arenas. In this case they should be treated as Bandits (see **Monster Manual/Basic Set/ DRAGON® 63**) insofar as levels and equipment are concerned.

Outlaws: will be runaway serfs, common hunters who have been caught with illegal game, and/or other malefactors fleeing from local justice or persecution. Their statistics should conform to one of the above types, according to the previous status of the outlaws concerned. In certain areas, they could well be seen as freedom fighters by the local populace. Whatever their position might be, they will not normally pose too much of a threat to most parties of adventurers.

Tradesmen

Medieval villages would not normally be big enough to support many craftsmen, and would depend on itinerant tradesmen or the nearest town to fulfil their needs. Even smiths and wheelwrights, doubling as housebuilders, carpenters, coffin-makers or undertakers, would be itinerant workers if the village was too small to have its own.

Villagers would also have to trade for necessities (such as salt, metal and pitch) if they did not have access to them, and items beyond the capabilities of their craftsmen to manufacture (tools, pottery), while the richer ones would attract traders in luxury items such as oil, wine and fine fabrics.

As professional travellers, these tradesmen will have a fund of knowledge about good and bad roads, useful short-cuts, the state of local trade (with associated dangers) and the like, in addition to being among the first to hear about current local news. Typical tradesmen who could be encountered include:

Cobblers and **Cloggers:** selling and repairing leather goods and shoes, or clogs.
Tailors: selling, repairing and making garments to order.
Joiners: repairing wooden structures and selling wooden implements such as bowls, cooking utensils, buckets, tubs and tuns.
Thatchers: constructing and repairing thatched roofs on all types of buildings.
Tinkers: selling and repairing metal implements at portable forges, sharpening knives and other cutting tools.
Quack Doctors: selling 'holy' relics and universal panaceas to cure all known and unknown ills.

All the above will be Lvl 0-1, AC 8-10, typically armed with daggers, tools and peasant weapons. Usually they will travel — and possibly even live — in wagons or carts in the company of one or more helpers, normally relatives.

Pedlars: Travelling on foot, these small traders sell a wide range of goods including pins, musical instruments, purses, ribbons, laces, gloves, knives, glasses, rabbit skins, vests, caps, girdles, pewterware and pots. In Lawful areas, they might require permits or licences, and would be restricted to certain circuits allotted to them. They will be Lvl 0-1, AC 10, and defend themselves with daggers or peasant weapons.

Herbalists: These usually travel on foot as well, offering herbal remedies for most complaints to villagers. Where the clerical community has power, herbalists might find themselves outlawed for encroaching on the preserves of the Gods. Statistics are as for pedlars.

Local Merchants: These have similar statistics to the merchants of the Monster Manual/Basic Handbook, but trade over a restricted area usually based upon a central town. As pedlars, they will trade in a variety of goods. Towns will want surplus agricultural products, such as corn, meat, hides, wool and other animal products, wood, bark for tanning, and so on; villages will require necessities like salt, manufactured goods, metals and luxury goods for the richer inhabitants.

Alternatively, they could trade in locally-extracted raw materials, or be local entrepreneurs taking such materials to and collecting finished articles from their outworkers. Whatever their speciality, they will usually travel in smaller numbers and be less well guarded than merchants travelling further afield. Each local merchant will be accompanied by a scribe and 1-3 carts and carters (or pack animals and handlers). If men-at-arms are called for, due to local unrest or other danger, they will number 1-10 per merchant, according to the cargo.

Masons, Carpenters and Diggers: Workers at these trades might travel vast distances to take employment on large scale construction projects, such as town walls, castles and temples. Some specialists would actually be sought out by the contractor. Cranes and scaffolding would be constructed on site, and tools would be provided by the employer. Journeymen might be presented with these tools upon the completion of their apprenticeships, however, so travelling workmen might be encountered with tools of their own. They will be levels 1-4, AC 8-10, armed with the tools of their trade and peasant weapons.

Scribes: Often travelling in search of more permanent employment, scribes will often take to occasional scrivening for illiterate folk to off-set the costs of their journey. Normally, they will only be encountered on roads between major settlements. They might be encountered bound for one of the construction projects mentioned above, hoping for accounting or record-keeping work, or they might have heard of a monarch, priest or institution looking for additional scribes to expand their records. They make much more reliable sources of information than most other travellers. They would be level 1-3, AC 10, and carry a dagger or staff for protection.

Bandits: Robbing travellers as a profession, rather than from short-term necessity as would an outlaw, bandits are detailed in the Monster Manual/Basic Rulebook/DRAGON magazine 63. The membership of bandit gangs will be made up of ex-mercenaries, deserters, successful outlaws, landless knights and other dangerous malcontents.

Dignitaries

Wayfaring adventurers might also meet up with people of considerable importance, travelling in a style befitting their rank. Although these important personages are unlikely to have much time for common soldiers-of-fortune and riff-raff adventurers, these encounters give the PCs an opportunity to make influential friends (or powerful enemies), and can result in some interesting commissions for the party.

Nobles and Retinues: In certain states, important lords may have estates scattered all over the country. This might be due to the policy of the local suzerain, since it makes it easier to control the nobles by depriving them of compact power bases. Elsewhere, on the other hand, nobles might control vast tracts of land, able to defy Royal authority with impunity. The only exceptions to this would be Lords of Marches or border provinces, who would need to draw on their resources to counter foreign attacks; the central authority should be pretty safe against the threat of rebellion from a source like this.

Instead of having all their dues sent to a central collection point, it would be common practice for lords and their followers to spend much time travelling

between estates, literally eating their dues for a few days, then moving on to the next. This custom would apply even to Kings. Drawing on historical examples, it might be possible for a monarch to move his court three times a fortnight on average!

Purveyors would go ahead of the main party, requisitioning carts and demanding corn, hay, oats, beer and meat from the unfortunate peasants.

A typical Royal entourage might consist of a Foreign Marshall (the designated military commander in the field), Inner Marshall (responsible for royal palaces and castles, and keeping them free of courtesans), Chamberlain (the chief accountant), Marshall of the Hall (to eject dogs and unworthy persons from the royal presence), Steward (organiser of the trip, who informed sheriffs and other notables who were expected to entertain the King's party), a Chancellor (chief dispenser of justice), a bodyguard — say two dozen archers, servants for all the officers, and a host of knights, squires, clerks, valets, grooms, carters, porters, falconers, huntsmen, messengers, bakers and kitchen staff.

The retinue proper would in turn be followed by parties with law suits, out-of-favour nobles seeking to reinstate themselves, other petitioners, women of ill-repute (taking advantage of the lack of wives present), and so on. This latter group will spend much time quarrelling, robbing, murdering and generally making themselves (and the King) unwelcome. Of course, certain monarchs might tire of this, and there are historical examples of Kings who ordered these 'men without character' to be put in irons for 40 days, and the 'women of ill-life' imprisoned and branded.

Nobles and their ladies travelled in fine carriages (costing up to 24,000gp in AD&D terms), or on horseback, and their accompanying retinues could be very large as well.

In certain circumstances, the nobles encountered might be journeying to or from a specific event, such as a wedding or tournament, to attend a parliament, or to visit some other noble or important personage.

Religious Dignitaries: These could be important landowners in their own right, and might be encountered in similar circumstances to the Noble Retinue, travelling between temples. Their retinues would be comparable with the nobles' as well, although the officials would be different, and there might be a high level fighter to act as Champion and fight in judicial duels.

Noble Hunters: These will be unlikely to surprise anybody, roaring about the countryside at their sport. They could be local dignitaries (with their relatives, friends and guests) or members of a travelling retinue. In either case, they will be hunting for sport, with a haughty disregard for those around them, and will be accompanied by various grooms, huntsmen, falconers, and so on.

Knights On Expeditions: These could be seeking adventure for its own sake — although of a different nature to the rather ignoble activities of most adventurers! — or be involved in a specific quest for a lord, lady or in fulfilment of a vow. Particularly where the knight has no specific quest in mind, he might challenge a suitably equipped player-character to an impromptu joust in the Arthurian tradition.

Knightly quests could range from running down monsters or brigands, rescuing abductees, seeking revenge upon those who have wronged the knight or his master, or seeking knowledge from elusive wisemen.

Alternatively, the knight might be on the way to/from a major conflict (perhaps a crusade), or a tournament.

Each knight will be accompanied by a squire, and might also have a number of men-at-arms if the task and the knight's stature warrants.

Robbers: In less well-governed areas, travellers were often robbed (and worse) by quasi-seigneurial bands under knights or nobles acting as a law unto themselves. The bands of these robber barons should be treated as hostile patrols as in the Dungeon Masters Guide/Expert Rulebook. The leader will normally have to be a fighting man of great experience or charisma to hold the group together.

Officials

A number of officials involved in the government of the area might be encountered. They are a good source of information regarding local rulers, but can be a great deal of trouble to adventurers if affronted, insulted or otherwise annoyed.

Sheriffs: These officers were responsible for tax collection and judging offences against the authority of the king (in which case the DM must judge what constitutes a crime in the area; certain places might be very intolerant of sorcery or priests, for example, whilst turning a blind eye to most murders and petty crime). Usually powerful nobles in their own right, they will be discovered travelling between localised courts, or returning to their central seat. Most will be fighters of levels 7-10, although a few might be thought of as clerics or even NM/FO (or Freeman, levels 4-7). They will be accompanied by 1-3 bailiffs (Fighters, levels 2-3), 2-4 scribes, 2-5 servants and 6-15 men-at-arms.

Bailiffs: These might be found independently of the sheriff under whom they work, apprehending lawbreakers and collecting taxes. They are unlikely to be popular with the local peasantry. They will be accompanied by a scribe and 2-5 men-at-arms.

Magistrates: Royal arbiters of law also travel dispensing justice, installed by the King perhaps to curb the power of some local magnate. Again, their members will be largely drawn from the fighting class (levels 3-6) or trusted freemen (levels 3-5), and they will be accompanied by 1-2 scribes, 2-5 servants and 2-8 men-at-arms.

Stewards: Where a noble or monarch has too many estates to manage personally, a steward or seneschal will be appointed. They visit their lord's manors occasionally to formulate and implement agricultural policy, convene the Manor court in the lord's absence, make sure that service dues are being rendered, and hear the accounts of the village reeves and elders. They will be of a similar stature to the Magistrate, and accompanied by a similar retinue.

Purveyors: These will accompany the noble retinue, having writs to requisition carts, horses and provisions. Often, their appearance will be the first warning of the approach of a noble retinue. They will be drawn from the fighting (levels 3-4) or thieving (levels 3-6) professions, and may have a small escort of fighters if the land ahead is difficult. Opposing *bona fide* purveyors will carry the stiffest penalties, but 30% will be charlatans....

Messengers: These will be employed by nobles, officials, church dignitaries or mercantile institutions, and will carry some token to designate their status. They will always be mounted in wilderness areas, although there is a 15% chance of them being on foot elsewhere.

Hindering a royal messenger will carry a stiff penalty, but merchants' and traders' couriers will carry less protection. However, where they carry important information, they might even have some kind of magical protection.

Patrols: These should be as in the Dungeon Masters Guide/Expert Rulebook, altered to suit local circumstance.

Entertainers

Many types of entertainers can be found travelling between markets, fairs, towns, festivals and banquets at wealthy houses. They will have much interesting information about good/bad towns and generous/miserly patrons, as well as a fund of juicy gossip, not all fictitious. Details of residences they have visited might be of particular interest to certain characters.

Entertainers are likely to travel in bands or troupes, perhaps under the auspices of a guild or patron. Famous practitioners will be in great demand in cities and noble houses, and such famous artistes should be considered as bards, or fighters/thieves of levels 1-8.

Conjurers: These can just be practised merchants of sleight-of-hand tricks (in which case they might also be good thieves), but some might be low-level magic users or illusionists (levels 0-2).

Bearwards: These men will display performing bears (or other animals). They are level 0.

Jugglers: There might be a thief of low level amongst a troupe of jugglers, but nearly all will be level 0.

Fire-Eaters: All level 0.

Tumblers & Acrobats: Depending on your point of view, these professions might either be good cover for a thief/acrobat, or the most obvious place to look for one. The majority will be level 0.

Travelling Players: There is always a great call for plays based on legends or important historical events. Such a play might be commissioned, and even the PCs might be lampooned by a good mimic. They will travel in bands of 10-30 and have wagons and carts to transport props and costumes. Although most will be Level 0 and AC 10, some might be fighters and/or thieves — possible even clerics — of levels 1-4, and there might be all manner of weapons and armour amongst the props.

Travelling Menageries: These are the forerunners of zoos and circuses. The animals will be transported in wheeled cages, accompanied by 1-2 owners, 3-10 carters, 3-10 animal handlers and 1-4 men-at-arms.

Using the Wayfarers Tables

All the categories of wayfarers are included in the following tables, which can be used whenever men (including patrols and characters) are called for when the Dungeon Masters Guide/Fiend Folio/Expert Rulebook encounter tables are used. Those groups not outlined in the descriptions above should be treated as before.

In a well structured campaign, the comings and goings of important personages who play an integral part in the campaign will be controlled by the DM to a greater extent. When an encounter with such a personality is called for, an existing noble who is not otherwise active could be called into play. Alternatively, an active noble could be 'just passing through'. The DM might then find that these 'new' nobles assume a greater prominence in the campaign, as the players seek employment, court favour, etc.

When the encounter tables are used in less-structured areas, or in areas the PCs are unlikely to cross again, the details and roles of encountered dignitaries should be tailored to the situation in hand.

The two right-hand columns on the table below give some indication of how the DM might reconsider the encounter in the light of different circumstances, and should not be taken too literally. Many other circumstances could also affect the way the by-ways of the area are used; the tables are by no means exhaustive. Various other conditions could be added, and considerable changes would have to be made to the encounters in circumstances where activity in the campaign is different — particularly if the setting is different. For a middle-eastern campaign, Grand Viziers, slave traders, caravans and exotic dancers might replace some of the types above.

More importantly, these revised encounter tables do show how a campaign can be brought alive, and given an air of greater believability. Chance encounters can be used to provide interesting subplots alongside the main course of the adventure, or information that helps the adventure towards its next episode. And this way, travelling becomes a much more interesting occupation, rather than just a necessary interlude between dungeon-delving and city intrigue.

Paul Vernon

Random Encounters — Men, By Category

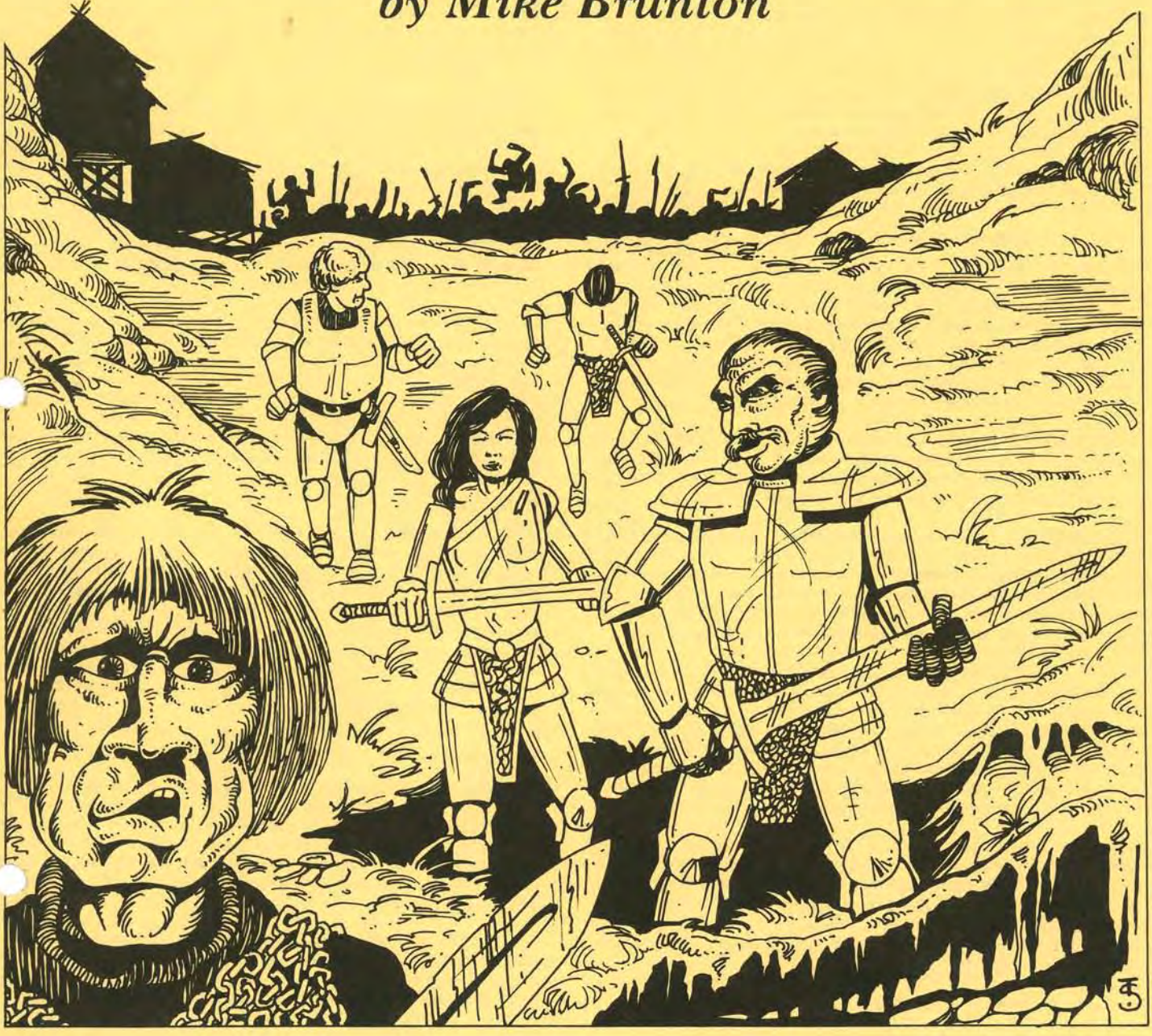
		Lawful Areas				Chaotic Areas				
Roll percentiles	No	Road/ Plain	Scrub/ Forest	Hills/ Mts	Marsh	Open/ Forest	Hills/ Mts	Marsh	Bad Weather	Wartime
Villagers	3-18	1-12	1-16	1-16	1-16	—	—	—	as normal	only 2-12 encountered
Carters	1-4	13-20	—	—	—	1-5	—	—	only on roads	1-3 encountered
Wndrg Labourers	2-12	21-24	17-20	17-20	17-20	—	—	—	1-6 encountered	none encountered
Beggars	1	25	21-23	21-23	21-23	—	—	—	as normal	more genuine hardship
Beggars	2-12	26-27	24	24	—	6-8	1-3	1-2	1-6 encountered	more genuine hardship
Cmn Hunters	4-48	28-30	25-29	25-29	24-29	9-10	4-10	3-10	3-36 encountered	3-36 encountered
Outlaws	3-18	31-32	30-32	30-32	30-32	—	—	—	as normal	8-64 encountered
Cobbler/Clogger	1	33-34	—	—	—	—	—	—	as normal	as normal
Tinker	1	35-36	—	—	—	—	—	—	as normal	shortage of goods
Tailor	1	37-39	—	—	—	—	—	—	as normal	shortage of goods
Joiner	1	40-42	33-35	—	—	—	—	—	none encountered	none near cities/coast
Thatcher	1	43-44	—	—	—	—	—	—	none in winter	as normal
Quack	1	45-46	—	—	—	11-12	11	11	as normal	richer; escorted
Pedlar	1	47-55	36-50	33-50	36-50	—	—	—	as normal	shortage of goods
Herbalist	1	56-60	51-56	51-56	51-56	—	—	—	as normal	as normal
Local Merchant	2-5	61-65	57-65	57-65	57-65	13-17	12-17	12-18	treat 64-65 as pedlar	3-8 + larger escort
Masons, Diggers									large parties near sites	
Carpenters	4-32	66-68	66-67	66-67	66-67	18-20	18	19	as normal	of defence construction
Scribes	1-2	69-71	68-69	68-69	68-69	—	—	—	none encountered	none encountered
Bandits	2-200	72	70-72	70-72	70-72	21-25	19-25	20-25	half encountered	double encountered
Nobles	1-3	73-74	73	73	—	26-31	26-27	26-27	none encountered	double escort
Temple D'nitaries	1-3	75	—	—	—	32-35	28	28	none encountered	4-7 encountered
Noble Hunters	3-30	76	74-76	74-76	73	36-40	29-36	27-39	none encountered	treat 76 as Nobles
Knights on Expeditions	1-3	77	77	77	74-76	41-45	37-42	40-45	as normal	more likely to challenge
Robbers	20-50	78	78	78	77-78	46-50	43-50	46-50	half normal	double normal
Sheriff	1	79	79	79	—	—	—	—	only on roads	double escort
Bailiffs	1-2	80-81	80-81	80-81	79	—	—	—	treat 81 as patrols	double escort
Steward	1	82	82	82-83	80	—	—	—	only on roads	double escort
Purveyors	1-3	83-84	83	84	—	—	—	—	as normal	requisition all horses
Messengers	1-4	85	84	85	81-82	51-55	51-55	51-55	as normal	25% with escort
Patrol	10-30	86-88	85-88	86-88	83-88	—	—	—	fewer challenges	60-100 near war zones
Entertainers	1-4	89-92	89-93	89-93	89-94	56-57	56-57	56-61	none encountered	treat 91-92 as patrols
Entertainers	2-12	93-94	94	94	—	58-59	58-63	62-65	none encountered	none encountered
Entertainers	30-100	95	95	95	—	60-65	—	—	none encountered	none encountered
Merchants	50-300	96-97	96	96	—	66-77	64-73	66-72	none encountered	double escort
Characters	2-12	98-99	97-99	97-99	96-98	78-88	74-83	73-82	as normal	as normal
Pilgrims	10-100	00	00	00	99-00	89-95	84-89	83-93	as normal	5-50 encountered
Tribesmen	10-100	—	—	—	—	96-98	90-97	94-00	as normal	20-200 encountered
Berserkers	10-100	—	—	—	—	99-00	98-00	—	as normal	30-300 encountered

IM 2 6 AD&D Paladin level 2-4 3-6 Player's

The GAMESFAIR '85 AD&D® Team Competition Module

The Great Paladin Hunt

by Mike Brunton



This mini-module was used during GamesFair '85 as the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Team Competition, a less-than-serious two-hour contest for teams of five players held on Friday 29th March. The Great Paladin Hunt does not quite use standard AD&D game rules and special rules are given to aid the Dungeon Master (DM) in running the adventure.

STOP! If you have been invited for dinner — to play in this adventure — do not read any further. The rest of the information is for the DM alone. Prior knowledge will only spoil the terror, suspense and anticipation of the first course.

A list of pregenerated characters — five Paladins — is provided on p34. DMs who wish to run this adventure for their players' characters should take note of the equipment and abilities of the competition characters. It is not recommended that major deviations from the competition characters are allowed, as this will unbalance the adventure unduly. It is fair to say that any weakling magic-users will suffer terribly in what is to come...

The statistics for monsters and NPCs are given in the following order: Armour Class (AC); Movement (MV); Hit Dice (HD) or Class & Level; hit points (hp); Number of Attacks (#AT); Damage (D); Special Attacks (SA); Special Defences (SD); Intelligence (Int); Alignment (AL); Size (eg L); Experience Points for overcoming (xp); To Hit Armour Class Zero (THACO); other notes as applicable.

THACO is the roll needed to hit a target with AC0. In most cases the roll needed to hit a target can be calculated as THACO minus target's AC. NSA as a notation is applicable only to magic items and signifies No Special Abilities for the item. Worn armour class is literally that: the armour a character is wearing, without any dexterity or magical adjustments.

Ability Checks

At certain points during the adventure characters may be required to make ability checks. This normally involves rolling less than the specified ability on a d20, but in special circumstances a roll using other types of dice may be required.

Introduction

The Great Paladin Hunt concerns the escape of a group of five paladins from the clutches of a band of gnolls, who have gathered to celebrate the Festival of R'r'rib'ett (a relatively minor god of the gnoll pantheon) with a traditional feast. Unfortunately for the paladins, the traditional main course of this feast is fresh human — and paladin-au-vin is on the menu.

However, the gnolls have another tradition, the Gnollmoot, in which only the strongest gnolls can partake. The main course is first released into the swamps with a small head start, and then hunted down before becoming a toothsome morsel. This gives the meat a certain flavour and tenderness that the gnolls greatly appreciate. The successful hunters also advance within the hierarchy of the tribe and are allowed to keep the humans' teeth as a mark of their success.

As the adventure starts, the Gnollmoot is about to begin. The player characters have been marinading all night in a pit cage full of slime...

Conduct Unbecoming

Paladins are granted special powers by virtue of their extreme goodness, and are quite rightly stripped of these powers when they stray from the straight and narrow. In spite of the stress of this adventure, the characters will be expected to maintain standards of gentility, and the players should be so warned. The DM should take note of the characters' and players' behaviour. For each offence against the code of Paladinhood, one benefit of paladin status will be lost. The following list of sample offences is not exhaustive, but should serve as a guide.

Failing to act in a Lawful Good manner and, more importantly, failing to be seen acting in a Lawful Good manner is the most heinous offence. This includes such actions as killing defenceless opponents, abandoning comrades-in-arms in their hour of need, theft and the like.

Ungentlemanly conduct, such as striking an opponent without fair warning (a battle cry is considered fair warning), stabbing friends or enemies in the back, cowardice, threats of torture or 'fates worse than death' to prisoners, refusing ladies (or anybody else) in distress, and simple bad manners to all and sundry (except unwashed peasantry) are also frowned upon in this adventure and attract equal penalties.

The DM should also encourage good (ie paladin-like) role-playing by applying the loss of benefits for player actions within the game that are not worthy of a paladin. Rude or lascivious language or behaviour, impoliteness to other players or the DM (especially the DM), 'accidentally' misreading the dice, bending the rules or arguing over the DM's interpretation of the same, slurping drinks, putting empty wrappers back in the *After Eight* box and passing the port to the right are not the marks of a gentle and courteous paladin.

Before removing any of the benefits of Paladinhood, the DM should give one warning. A traditional 200d6 (the DM does not have to roll for the damage caused) lightning bolt from the heavens should strike the ground (or a convenient tree) next to the offending character(s), knocking them off their feet, but causing no damage. Should such subtlety fail, the benefits of being a paladin are lost in the following order (one for each offence):

1. The ability to detect evil
2. Protection from evil 1" radius
3. The ability to turn undead (assuming the almost-ex-paladin could formerly do this)
4. The ability to 'lay on hands' and cure wounds.
5. The +2 saving throw bonus.
6. The ability to cure disease.
7. Immunity from disease.

The Brinegrove Swamps

The terrain around the gnoll village is unpleasant in the extreme, and is full of unforeseen risks for the unwary and foolish traveller. The original coastline once followed the line of cliffs with a few small stacks of harder rock just off the coast. Over the centuries sand, silt, mud and other detritus gradually built up, anchored by a variety of unhealthy brine-loving plants. The swamps, mud flats and 'forests' of the area are the result — a poor environment for the creatures that live there.

The mud flats are relatively open areas of mud and scrub, salty and unhealthy, with a smell of decay and old fish. Few creatures, save a hardy gull or two, make any effort to live in the mud flats. The swamp areas are primarily open, shallow and brackish water, overgrown with tall (often 10' or more) reeds and ugly surface dwelling scum-like algae.

The forest areas are apparently safer, but very dark, as mangrove-like trees crowd together. Root networks hold the mud and sand together, with occasional patches of open mud and water. Beneath the trees the air is oppressive and fetid.

There are several trails and tracks across the Brinegrove; all are clearly marked through use, or by signs such as carved or painted trees, wooden stakes with tribal markers or cairns of rocks. These signs are the only indication of where the trail is in some places. Travel along these paths is, for the most part, safe, although far from speedy, cutting movement rates to two-thirds (eg an MV 9" equates to 60 yards per turn).

Off the tracks the Brinegrove is treacherous. Areas which look identical to the track conceal deep areas of quicksand or bubbles of marsh gas. Every round that characters do not travel along the path there is a 1 in 4 chance that the leading character(s) will step into some kind of hazard. The DM should roll a d6:

On a roll of 1-5 the character has fallen into an area of quicksand, and will sink in (1 + worn AC) rounds, drowning after a further three rounds. Characters can be pulled clear by a combined strength of 40 or more and then revived at any point before death.

On a roll of 6 the character has been unfortunate enough to disturb a bubble of gas, which bursts. The surface layer — and the character — then drop into the hole which promptly fills with mud. The character is buried, and takes 1-4 points of damage per round for three rounds, after which death is caused by suffocation. The character may be dug out on a strength ability check on d100 for each character involved — and revived before death occurs. A character making a dexterity ability check on 5d6 when a gas bubble ruptures will leap clear in time.

Events

Unlike the fixed **encounters** 1-12, which occur at specified geographical locations, **events** take place at set times. The DM should have a watch to hand to monitor the passage of real time, so that the following delights can be inflicted upon the player characters at the right moment. The events in The Great Paladin Hunt take place at these set intervals after the start of play, regardless of how much 'game time' has passed since the playing session began. The location of the party in the Brinegrove does not matter to the course of most events. When it is time for an event, it occurs — and if the party are already in the middle of an encounter that is their misfortune!

15 minutes

After 15 minutes the first group of hunting gnolls will catch up with the player characters, due mostly to the keen nose and hunting sense of 'Woof', their hunting gnome. The gnolls will burst from the undergrowth behind the party and attack, the hunting gnome slavering for blood at the end of his taut chain. The party will be surprised automatically, unless the players specifically stated that the rearmost character was listening for sounds of pursuit.

If a character is listening for pursuing hunters, an Intelligence ability check is required for the character involved to filter out the noise of pursuit from the other noises of the swamp. If the character does hear the gnoll hunting party, the normal surprise rules should be applied.

7 gnolls: AC 5 (7); MV 9"; HD 2; hp 11 each; #AT 1; D 2-8 or by weapon; Int Low-Ave; AL CE; Size L; xp 40 each; THACO 16; armed with swords (D1-8) and morning stars (D2-8); MM p46.

'Woof' the hunting gnome: AC 5; MV 12" (6"); HD 1; hp 6; #AT 4 (1); D 1-6/1-6/1-2/1-2 (1-6); SA +1 vs goblins and kobolds; SD save as 5HD monster; Int Low (High); AL N; Size S; xp 20; THACO 19; modified gnome — MM p46.

Two gnolls carry heavy crossbows with 15 bolts each (D 1-6), but they are bound by the rules of the hunt and will not use the crossbows until they are attacked by missile weapons. Although the gnolls do not know it, one of these weapons is a **heavy crossbow +2**, and three of its associated bolts are **bolts +1**. Each gnoll has 10gp in mixed coins and a small item of treasure — an earring, small trinket or the like, worth 25gp.

The hunt leader (dressed in stolen human finery — AC 7) has two iron-bound flasks, one of which contains two doses of a **potion of gnome control** (dark brown with a white froth, tastes of hops — cf **potion of human control**) while the other holds four doses of a **potion of speed** (green and slimy, tastes of cider vinegar). This second potion has an unfortunate side effect in that it lowers the imbiber's intelligence

by 6 points for 5-20 hours. This effect is cumulative if another dose is swallowed during this time, and should the victim's intelligence drop to 0 or below the character will die (no saving throw).

'Woof' has been given a dose of the **potion of speed**, hence his multiple attacks, including two bites for 1-2 points of damage each — the potion has the additional effect of making him unthinkingly savage and hostile. The gnolls keep him on a 20' chain at all times and use him as the equivalent of a hunting dog. The current dose will wear off after 4 melee rounds and Snaggletooth Koboldhammer — 'Woof' — will be restored to normality, but the gnoll leader will keep control of him with the **potion of gnome control**, making the poor gnome sit down in a convenient puddle until the fight is over.

Should Snaggletooth Koboldhammer survive the fight, he will beg the party to release him from his chain and allow him to accompany them in their escape attempt. If the players accede to his request the DM should note that Snaggletooth will be unable to keep up with them (due to his 6" movement rate) unless they slow down to his pace or give him a dose of the **potion of speed**. Dosing him will cause his Intelligence to drop to Animal for 5-20 hours and make him unutterably savage — he will immediately attack the party, driven to do so by the potion's effect.

50 minutes

High above the swamp, often rising as much as 50 feet from the ground, soar Orbil and Wylva, two brothers now fallen victim to wights. These two were obsessed by the idea of flight and have built a rather primitive two-wight hang-glider in which they ride the thermals above the cliffs, rivalling the birds — the flightless ones — in their mastery of the air.

The first the characters will know of these two depends upon where they are 50 minutes into the playing session. In open swamp or mud flat the characters will see an enormous 'bird' swooping towards them, with two 'human' figures clutched in its claws. Seconds later, the 'bird' will crash into the ground, and Orbil and Wylva will be hurled through the air into the middle of the group of characters. Orbil and Wylva Wight will be surprised on a 1, 2 or 3 — the shock of the impact has dazed them.

If the characters are under a canopy of trees the first thing they will know of the wights is the hang-glider's sudden crash into the trees and the consequent depositing of the wights into the characters' midst. Normal surprise rules apply in this case.

Orbil and Wylva: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 4+3; hp 25 each; #AT 1; D 1-4; SA 'temporary' energy drain; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; Int Ave; AL LE; Size M; xp 665 each; THACO 15; modified wight — MM p100.

Orbil and Wylva are wights, but they really do not take a true interest in their wightdom. Anyone totally drained by these two will fall into a coma for an hour, then rise as an independent, half strength wight. Characters will have lost energy levels restored (lost hit points will not be restored), should Orbil and Wylva be destroyed.

The wights have no treasure, and their flying contraption is damaged beyond the abilities of the characters to repair it.

1 hour 15 minutes

A second hunting pack of gnolls, more numerous and confident in their abilities than the first group, are taking little care to move quietly — the player characters will hear sounds of pursuit for 2-4 melee rounds before the gnolls actually break cover and attack. If an ambush of some kind is set up, the characters will automatically achieve surprise on the first melee round. One round after combat is joined, the gnolls will be joined by their (rather lumbering) companion in the hunt, an ogre.

9 gnolls: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 11 each; #AT 1; D 2-8 or by weapon; Int Low-Ave; AL CE; Size L; xp 40 each; THACO 16; armed with longswords (D 1-8) and battleaxes (D 1-8); MM p46.

1 ogre: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; hp 27; #AT 1; D 1-10; Int Low; AL CE; Size L; xp 215; THACO 15; MM p75.

The gnolls have 11gp each in mixed coins, and a trinket of some type worth 25gp each. One of the gnolls wears a **ring of fire resistance**. The ogre has no treasure except a small potion bottle containing two doses of a **potion of healing** (bright blue, smells of cinnamon) which he has never used because he cannot get the stopper out — and it is such a pretty colour! He also uses a **two-handed sword +2** (NSA) as a walking stick — it is still in its leather scabbard and the cross guard is missing.

Encounters

1. Starting the Adventure

The DM should read the following out to players at the start of play:

A night in a pit half-full of slime, muck and small, wriggly things is less than pleasant. Although the physical discomfort counts for nothing, armour, even that of the noblest paladin, goes rusty if given such treatment. But even more insulting than the repulsive worm creatures that have spent the night investigating your lower armour, are the manners of your captors: the gnolls are boorish to a man — or rather, gnoll.

And worse is yet to come. Dragged from the pit at dawn, you now stand in the centre of the gnoll village at the edge of the Brinegrove Swamp. 200 or more of the ugly creatures — and other evil chaotic beasts — stare at you, prod you with their sharp nails and, most worrying of all, feel your flesh and lick their lips.

Suddenly the crowd grows quiet and draws back from you. Into the centre of the village strolls the biggest, ugliest gnoll you have ever seen. At his heels is a cringing gnoll dressed in an elf maiden's wedding dress. The chief sits, and gestures to his bodyguards. They walk forward and thrust five swords into the ground before you, then back away. The chief nods in satisfaction and begins to speak. Wedding Dress steps forward and translates his hideous speech into badly accented Common:

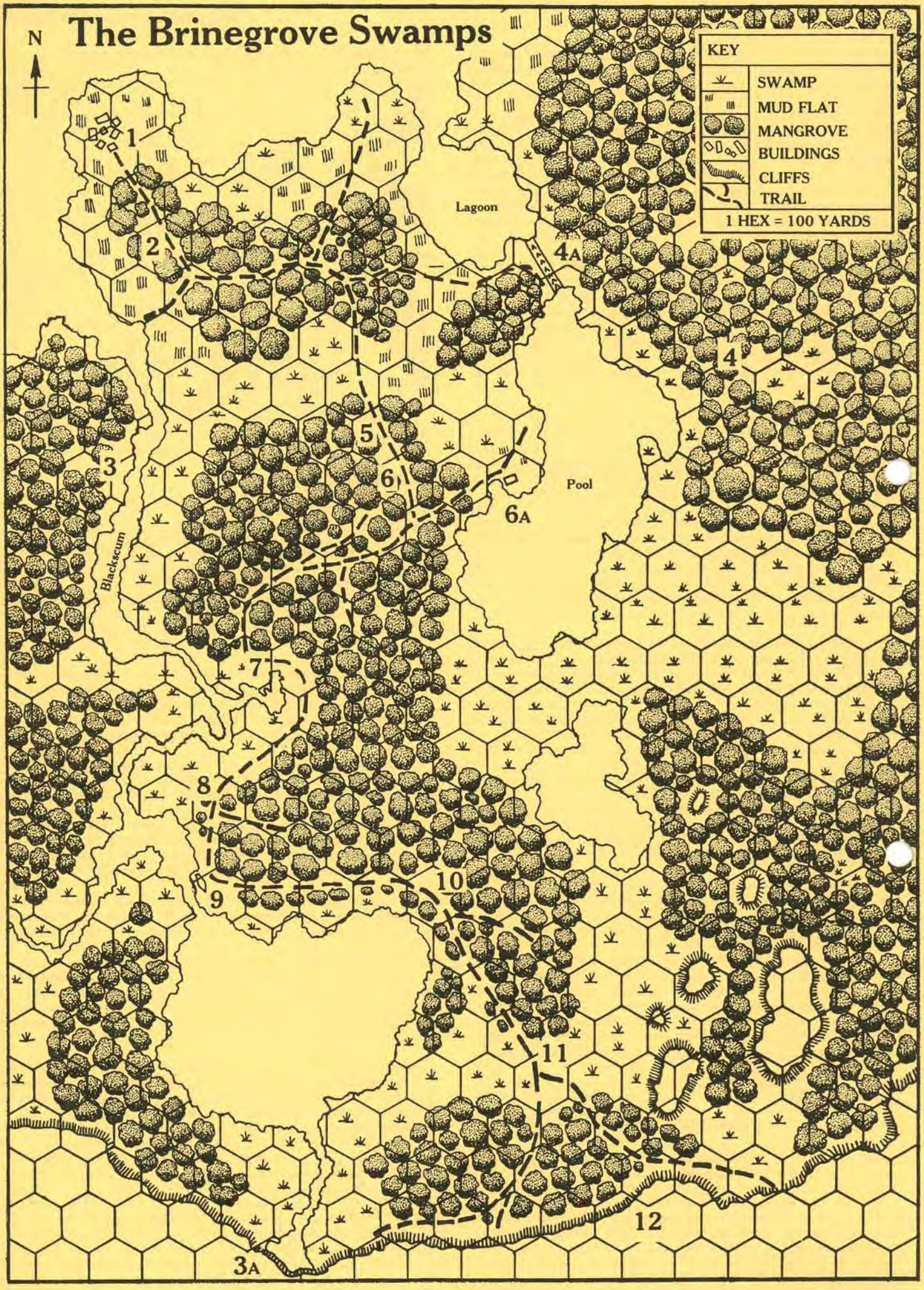
'The Great Chief of Gnolls speaks to you, unworthy ones, of the honour that is yours! Today is the Feast of R'r'rib'ett, the Great God of our people. Today is the Hunt of R'r'rib'ett. Today you die!

'The Mighty Chief grants you gifts. The first gifts are your swords – take them, but remember warriors surround you. The second gift is the breath in your lungs, the beating of your hearts, and the sun on your ugly human faces. It is said that the rat only lives fully just before it is thrown into the cooking fire! So live, for soon you die! Hungry bellies await you!'

The Chief and his tribe howl with laughter. Wedding Dress reaches into a pouch around his neck and pulls out a small box, once of fine workmanship and inlaid with precious gems, now dented and stained. The Chief speaks again, and Wedding Dress hands him the box. Then all eyes are turned to you.

'Escape and we feast on other fare! But humans have never escaped the swamp! When the box starts its song, you run. When the box ends its song, we hunt!'

The Chief holds the box high in the air and opens the lid. From within comes a slight whirring noise, and then the first off-key notes of an old lullaby. The gnolls stand transfixed by the box and its tiny melody. As one, you turn and run into the Brinegrove, the notes drifting after you on the breeze....


The Brinegrove Swamps
N
KEY
SWAMP
MUD FLAT
MANGROVE
BUILDINGS
CLIFFS
TRAIL
1 HEX = 100 YARDS
Lagoon
Pool
Blackscum
1
2
3
4
4A
5
6
6A
7
8
9
10
11
12
3A

MINDMELD

a game of psionic warfare
For 1 or 2 Players

by Alan E Paull

In the distant mountains far from the mundane world, live monks of the secret Order of the High Brethren. These monks have devoted themselves to the powers of the mind, and over the centuries their mental faculties have developed beyond those of ordinary men.

The height of their achievement is to control the mind of another. As yet, they keep to the narrow path of their vows, and they exert themselves merely as a test of skill and only against their own kind. As a brother increases his grasp of the psychic arts, he graduates from Novice to Adept to Master to High Master and finally to Grand Master.

1 INTRODUCTION

Mindmeld is a game for one or two players. The game represents the mental battles of the High Brethren. In the solitaire version, the player takes the part of a single monk pitted against six of the Brethren. In the two-player version, the players take turns as the defending monk, attacked by the other player. Attack ability gradually increases until one player is defeated.

As mental battles are abstract affairs, the Brethren use Symbols to help them concentrate. They have discovered that representative Symbols are much easier to control than hazy mental concepts. These symbols are:

For the Defender: the Dagger, the Sword and the Shield.

For the Attacker: the Wolf, the Ogre and the Wyrm.

It is recommended that a novice player read through the rules quickly, and immediately play a Solitaire Game, referring to the appropriate rule sections whenever needed. This procedure will enable a Novice to understand the rules of the game very swiftly.

2 THE SOLITAIRE GAME

2.1 The Playing Pieces

There are three Ranks of Symbols:

Rank 1, Daggers and Wolves; move up to 3 hexes
Rank 2, Swords and Ogres; move up to 2 hexes
Rank 3, Shields and Wyrms; move 1 hex only

2.2 Initial Set-Up

The player's initial pieces consist of:

4 Daggers, 2 Swords and 1 Shield

These may be placed anywhere on the playing area, including the centre hex.

The Attacking Symbols consist of:

24 Wolves, 12 Ogres and 6 Wyrms

These must be placed around the playing area on the marked hexes; 4 Wolves, 2 Ogres and 1 Wyrm to each side of the board (the names of the Symbols are printed on the appropriate hexes). Each Ogre and each Wyrm is stacked with a Wolf.

2.3 How To Win the Game

The player wins the game by defeating all the Attacking Symbols and so preventing any from entering the Soulshrine — the center hex of the playing area. If an Attacking Symbol enters the Soulshrine, the player's mind has been taken over and the game is lost.

2.4 How To Play

Players progress in Rank during a series of games. The player begins as a Novice, and only 3 Attacking Symbols enter play each turn. When the player has won a game, he or she becomes an Adept, and in the next game, 4 Attacking Symbols enter play each turn. If an Adept wins, the player progresses to Master rank and 5 Attacking Symbols enter play each turn. A victorious Master becomes a High Master, and 5 Attacking Symbols enter play each turn. A successful High Master reaches the final exalted Rank of Grand Master.

2.5 Sequence of Play

Play progresses in a series of Turns. Each turn is divided into seven steps. In the first turn, play commences at Step B.

Step A: All Attacking Symbols move; see 2.6
Step B: Further Attacking Symbols enter play (see 2.7) and move. The number entering play each turn depends upon the player's rank; see 2.4
Step C: Player may fragment Swords or Shield; see 2.9
Step D: Player may move any, some or all Defending Symbols; see 2.8
Step E: Player may meld stacked Defending Symbols; see 2.10
Step F: Player may defeat Attacking Symbols adjacent to Defending Symbols; see 2.11
Step G: Return to Step A

2.6 Movement of Attacking Pieces

Attacking Symbols must be moved their maximum movement allowance (see 2.1) if possible. Attacking Symbols move only along the tracks on the playing area and only towards the Soulshrine. Higher-ranked pieces must be moved first; ie, Wyrms before Ogres, Ogres before Wolves.

If an Attacking Symbol has to move into a hex which is occupied by a Defending Symbol, the Attacking Symbol lands on the occupied hex and the Defending Symbol is removed from play; the Attacking Symbol then ceases movement for that turn.

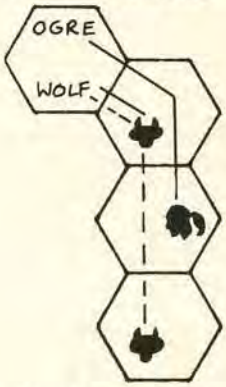
If its track is blocked by another Attacking Symbol, the moving Attacking Symbol must cease movement until the next turn. An Attacking Symbol may only advance if an unblocked track leads out of the hex it occupies and towards the Soulshrine, or if it is removing a Defending Symbol from play. Attacking Symbols may not stack, except in their starting hexes, and they may not 'jump' other Symbols.

If there is a choice of tracks for an Attacking Symbol, the Symbol will follow the left track if it started the game from the left side of the 4 set-up hexes on that side, and the right track otherwise. The tracks for the Wyrm Symbols are denoted by dotted lines.

2.7 How Attacking Symbols Enter Play

Each turn the player rolls 2d6 to determine which Attacking Symbols enter play. It is recommended that the two dice are of different colours, one to denote the side of the board (1-6) the other denoting the Rank of Symbol (1-3 — Wolf, 4-5 — Ogre, 6 — Wyrm). The number of Symbols entering play depends upon the Rank of the player; see 2.4

As the Attacking Symbols enter play, they must be moved their maximum movement allowance, subject to the exceptions noted in 2.6. ***EXAMPLE:*** *A new Wolf entering play must be moved 3 hexes from its set-up hex along the appropriate track; if an Ogre had started from the same hex as the Wolf, the Wolf would only be able to move one hex.*



If an Attacking Symbol is blocked by another Attacking Symbol, so that it cannot move from its set-up hex, it may not move until the next turn, at which time its track will be at least partially clear. Symbols blocked on their set-up hexes should be inverted, to distinguish them from pieces that have not yet entered play.

If no Symbol of the appropriate Rank remains on the side of the board indicated by the die, a Symbol of the next lowest Rank must be used (ie, if a Wyrm is rolled for, and there is none, an Ogre enters play; if no Ogre, a Wolf enters play). If no Symbols at all remain on the indicated side of the board, a Symbol of the indicated Rank enters play from the next side clockwise around the board. If more than one of a particular type of Symbol remains on the indicated side of the board, the Attacking Symbols always enter play first from the left of the set-up hexes. Note that once all 42 Attacking Symbols have entered play, no further Symbols are used.

Symbols *(mount on card and cut along lines)*

WYRM	WYRM	WYRM	WYRM	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	OGRE	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF
WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF	WOLF
WOLF	WOLF	SHIELD	SWORD	SWORD	SWORD	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER	DAGGER					

2.8 Movement of Defending Symbols
Defending Symbols may move up to their maximum movement allowance (see 2.1) into any unoccupied hexes on the playing area. They are not restricted in any way by the tracks, by the Soulshrine or by Rank.

Defending Symbols may not enter hexes occupied by Attacking Symbols, nor may they 'jump' over Attacking Symbols.

A Defending Symbol may not move through a hex occupied by another Defending Symbol or Symbols (ie, it may not 'jump'). A Defending Symbol may only stack with another Defending Symbol or Symbols if a meld involving all the stacked pieces takes place in Step E.

NOTE: To aid the player's memory, he or she may wish to invert Defending Symbols after movement, so that the player can tell which Symbols have yet to move. The Symbols should be turned face up again before the Player starts Step F.

2.9 Fragmenting
The player may fragment any Swords or the Shield in Step C. A Sword fragments into 2 Daggers; a Shield fragments into 4 Daggers *or* 2 Daggers and 1 Sword *or* 2 Swords. The fragmented Symbol is removed from play and the new Symbols are stacked in the hex and may then move their full movement allowance.

2.10 Melding
In Step E, the player must meld any Defending Symbols stacked together in one hex. 2 Daggers meld into 1 Sword; 4 Daggers *or* 2 Daggers and 1 Sword *or* 2 Swords meld into a Shield. No other combinations are permitted. The melding Symbols are removed from play and replaced by the single new piece.

For each meld during the turn, an additional Attacking Symbol enters play in the next turn. Note that this is not a permanent alteration to the number of Attacking Symbols entering play each turn; it lasts one turn only.

2.11 Defeating Attacking Symbols
The player must move the Defending Symbols so as to defeat the Attacking Symbols. Defeated Symbols are removed from play.

Any Defending Symbol which moves to a hex adjacent to a Wolf will defeat it. To defeat an Ogre, the player must move two Symbols adjacent to it, including at least one Sword or the Shield. Only a Dagger, Sword and the Shield in combination can defeat a Wyrm. Note that the Symbol(s) must be **moved** next to the Attacking Symbol; stationary Symbols cannot defeat Attacking Symbols (though moving from one adjacent hex to another — and, if possible, back again — does meet this requirement). Note also that newly melded Symbols may defeat Attacking Symbols, if **all** the Symbols involved in the meld moved.

A single Defending Symbol may defeat or help defeat only **one** Attacking Symbol each turn, even if it is adjacent to two or more Attacking Symbols.

3 The Two-Player Game

The rules are the same for the Two-Player Game as for the Solitaire Game, **except** where noted below. One player is the Attacker, the other is the Defender.

3.1 Initial Set-Up
The Defender's initial Symbols are the same as in the Solitaire Game (see 2.1); 4 Daggers, 2 Swords and 1 Shield. They may be placed anywhere on the playing area, including the Soulshrine.

The Attacker has all the Attacking Symbols. These are **not** arrayed around the board at the beginning of the game.

3.2 How To Win The Game
In a **Single Game**, the Attacker wins if any Attacking Symbol enters the Soulshrine. The Defender wins by defeating all 42 Attacking Symbols.

In a **Grand Trial**, players alternate between controlling the Attacking and Defending Symbols over a series of games. The strength of the Attacker increases, until one Defending monk succumbs.

The series consists of 'rounds' of 2 games, with first one player, then the other as the Defender. The series starts with 5 points of Attacking Symbols entering play each turn (see 3.3). If both Defenders win their games when 5 points per turn are used, then the Attacker receives 6 points per turn for the two games of the next round. If both survive again, 7 points per turn are used, and so on. The first player to win a game as the Attacker wins the Grand Trail.

The first Defender is chosen by some random method. Subsequently, if both monks survive a round of two games, the first Defender for the next round should be the monk who lost the greater number of defending points in the previous round. In the event of a tie, a random method will have to be used again, to decide who shall be the first Defender.

3.3 How To Play
Each turn, the Attacker deploys a number of Attacking Symbols. The precise number and type is decided by the Attacker with reference to a point score. A Wolf counts as 1 point, an Ogre as 2, and a Wyrm as 4 points. The Attacker may deploy any type or combination of Symbols as long as the total allowable points for that round is not exceeded (see 3.2)

In a **Single Game**, it is suggested that the Attacker deploys up to 6 points per turn. ***EXAMPLE:*** *6 points could be 6 Wolves, or 3 Ogres, or 1 Wyrm and 2 Wolves, and so on.*

When calculating the loss of points by each Defender, a Dagger counts as 1 point, a Sword as 2 points and a Shield as 4.

3.4 Sequence of Play
Step A: Attacker must move all Attacking Symbols; see 3.5
Step B: Further Attacking Symbols enter play and move; see 3.3 and 3.6
Step C: Attacker must meld any stacked Attacking Symbols; see 3.9
Step D: Defender may fragment, as in the Solitaire Game
Step E: Defender may move any, some or all Defending Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game
Step F: Defender must meld stacked Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game
Step G: Defender may defeat Attacking Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game
Step H: Return to Step A

3.5 Movement of Attacking Symbols
The Attacker may move Attacking Symbols as in the Solitaire Game, **except** that where an Attacker has a choice of tracks out of a hex, **either** track may be selected, and in addition, for the purposes of movement the Rank of the Symbols is ignored.

3.6 How Attacking Symbols Enter Play
Each turn, the Attacker chooses any of the set-up hexes on the outside of the board as the set-up hex for each Attacking Symbol entering play that turn. More than one Symbol may start from the same hex, if desired. Note that this gives the Attacker the choice of 24 hexes for each Symbol entering play.

3.7 Movement of Defending Symbols
Defending Symbols move as in the Solitaire Game.

3.8 Fragmenting
The Defending player only may fragment Symbols. This is handled as in the Solitaire Game.

3.9 Melding
The Defender must meld stacked Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game. Additionally, the Attacker may meld Attacking Symbols with the same restrictions as the Defender. 2 Wolves meld into an Ogre; 4 Wolves **or** 2 Wolves and 1 Ogre **or** 2 Ogres may meld into a Wyrm. For each meld made by the Defender during the turn, an additional point is added to the Attacker's point total for Symbols entering play in the next turn. For each meld made by the Attacker a point is deducted from the points total. Note that in the Solitaire Game, these additions and deductions last only one turn, unless further melds are made.

3.10 Defeating Attacking Symbols
These is handled as in the Solitaire Game.

4 Players' Notes

4.1 Defender (Solitaire and Two-Player Games)
You must avoid losing any Symbols, especially early in the game, unless you are forced to do so to prevent the Attacker winning. Your greatest advantage is knowing where the committed Attacking Symbols will be nest turn, so you can choose which ones to defeat first. Mobility is another asset. Plan ahead, and avoid being caught by new Symbols entering play from unexpected directions.

4.2 Attacker
Though you have a limited range of options, try to use them to the full. You have to **win** the game, while the Defender merely has to avoid losing. Let your pieces support each other. If you can force the Defender to lose pieces, your opponent will be weakened for the remainder of the game. Your pieces should work together as much as possible.

Credits

Game Design: Alan E Paull
Playing Board: Tim Sell
Playtesting: Lucy Annett, Terry Bonnick, Bob Carlysle, Jonathan Garnett, Ian Leggat, Charlie Paull, Jeanette and John Simpson.
Thanks To: Carol, Richard and Samantha Calcutt, and Philip Paull.

Sequence of Play: The Solitaire Game

Step A: All Attacking Symbols move

Step B: Further Attacking Symbols enter play and move. The number entering play each turn depends upon the player's rank

Step C: Player may fragment Swords or Shield

Step D: Player may move any, some or all Defending Symbols

Step E: Player may meld stacked Defending Symbols

Step F: Player may defeat Attacking Symbols adjacent to Defending Symbols

Step G: Return to Step A

Sequence of Play: The Two-Player Game

Step A: Attacker must move all Attacking Symbols

Step B: Further Attacking Symbols enter play and move

Step C: Attacker must meld any stacked Attacking Symbols

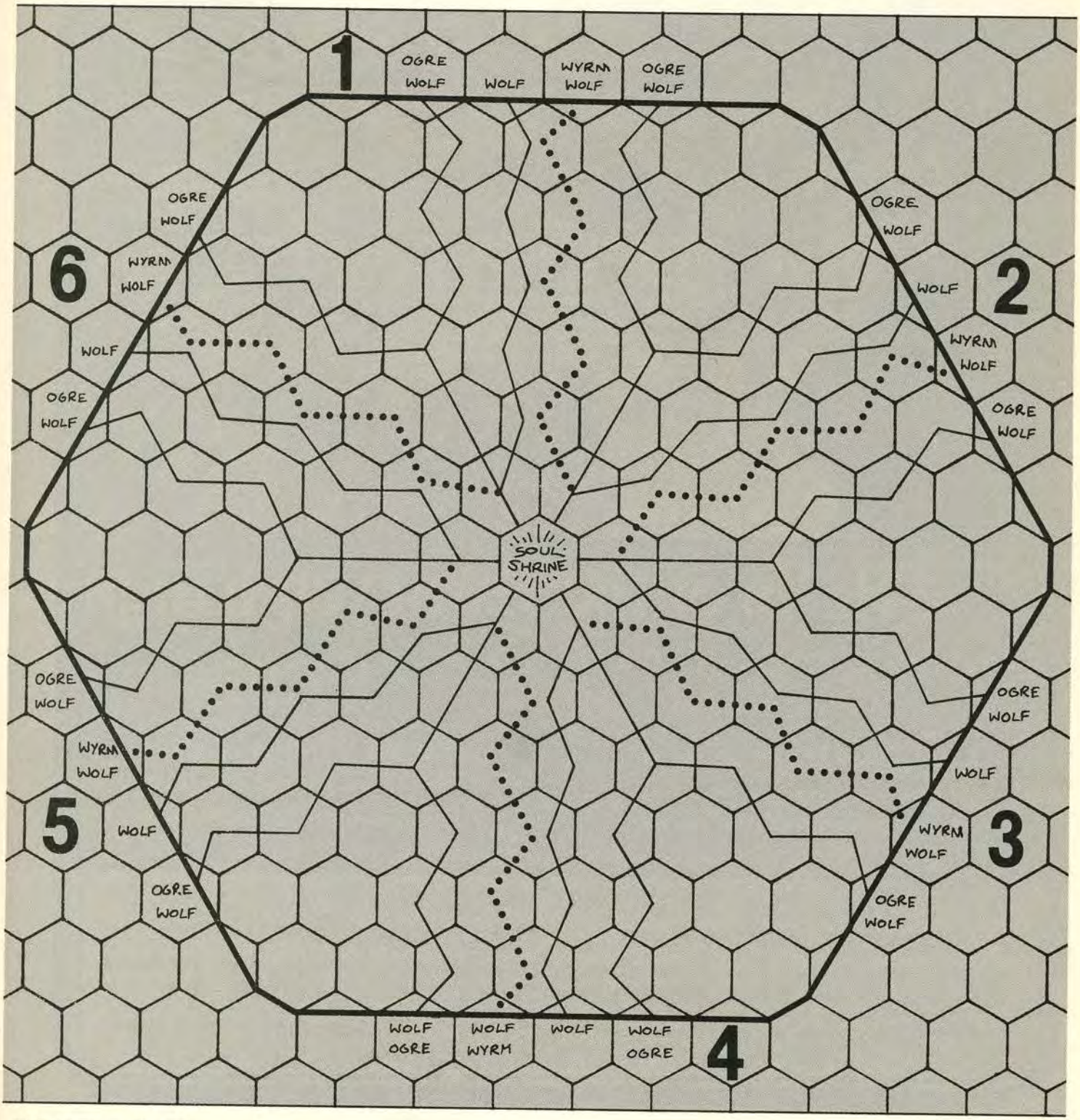
Step D: Defender may fragment, as in the Solitaire Game

Step E: Defender may move any, some or all Defending Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game

Step F: Defender must meld stacked Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game

Step G: Defender may defeat Attacking Symbols, as in the Solitaire Game

Step H: Return to Step A



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The five swords that the gnolls have brought in are: a two-handed sword (of the competition characters only Heronimous may use this without the non-proficiency penalty), one **broadsword +1** (NSA), one non-magical broadsword (Yezebel or Pisces) one **longsword +2** (NSA) and one non-magical longsword (Heronimous, Duarte or Koddlyng). Alternatively, the DM may let characters have one of their own weapons if the competition characters are not being used.

Should the characters turn round and head straight back into the village, the gnolls will take this as a sign that the characters have given up without a fight. The entire tribe of gnolls will attack immediately in an attempt to rend the characters limb from limb.

Attacking the village and — as is more than likely — dying in the process should be discouraged. If the characters do consider returning to the village the DM is entitled to think of this as an act unworthy of a paladin. While it may appear to be a worthy act to destroy such evil, the result of certain death — and the subsequent inclusion of the paladins' remains into the Feast of R'r'rib'ett mean that, on balance, it is not the course of action for wise and noble men. Evil's purposes would have been served, so prudence indicates that the paladins should try to escape.

If the characters still insist on returning to the village they will meet the entire gnoll population of the village who are waiting for the musical box to finish playing. For convenience's sake the DM should ignore the individual differences within the tribe.

226 gnolls: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 11 each; #AT 1; D 2-8; Int Low-Ave; AL CE; Size L; xp 40 each; THACO 16; MM p46.

2. The Lurking Slitherer

Within the cover of the mangroves lurks a babbler, who preys on those gnolls who foolishly wander alone beneath the trees. After the characters have passed into the darkness of the mangroves, the babbler will attack them, seeking a meal of tasty human flesh. It will attempt to sneak up behind the player characters and attack the rearmost party member, attempting to drag off a crusty human morsel to its lair.

Even if spotted before it can attack, it will still do so, as its luck in ambushing gnolls has been poor recently. The gnolls know of this creature and fear it, but have never managed to track it back to its lair — cunningly positioned so close to the gnoll village.

1 babbler: AC 6; MV 6" or 12"; HD 5; hp 25; #AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA can only attack when upright (6" movement), only 25% chance of detecting when slithering (12" movement), does double damage and attacks at +4 due to back attack if undetected; Int Ave — but cunning; AL CE; Size L; xp 255; THACO 15; FF p13.

The babbler will flee back to its lair when it has 15 or fewer hit points remaining. The lair lies some 30 yards west of the track and the characters will have no difficulty in following the babbler back there. Once in its lair the babbler will fight to the death.

The lair is a set in the midst of a group of mangroves, thickly entwined with crawling vines and rank vegetation. Little more than a raised nest of woven branches, it is lined with broken bones and the accumulated spoils of its attacks. Most of these are simply torn, bloodstained clothing, broken weapons and shields, and damaged armour. Small trinkets (seven in all, worth 20gp each) and mixed coins (worth 127gp in total) are scattered about, and a careful search will uncover a pouch containing a emerald (worth 250gp), a plain gold ring (worth 10gp) and a stoppered flask containing two doses of a potion of poison (bright yellow, tastes of blueberries). Beneath the pouch is a scabbarded **scimitar -1** (NSA, save that its owner will always believe it to be of at least +2 quality).

3. The Western Boundary - Across the Blackscum

The Blackscum is a narrow, foul estuary that lies to the west of the gnoll village, and it effectively delineates the western boundary of the gnolls' hunting ground. The river is shallow (no more than 3' deep at most), slow moving and, as befits its name, is covered with a foul layer of green-black scum and filth. Crossing the Blackscum — even its pools and lakes — is relatively easy, but each round a dexterity ability check must be made to avoid slipping on a patch of bottom mud or slime. Characters who do slip will be totally immersed in the waters of the Blackscum, but will have no difficulty in regaining their footing.

The waters of the Blackscum smell strongly of bad eggs, rotting vegetation and salt. They are also slightly acidic, but not enough to cause any real damage. Metals — other than gold — that are dipped into the Blackscum will be blackened and faintly pitted. Swallowing the water will cause nauseous feelings for 2-8 rounds (save vs poison at +2), but no permanent damage. Should water get into a character's eyes, it will cause stinging and burning sensations (although no damage), and unless the eyes are washed with clean water or some other unpolluted fluid the character will suffer a penalty to hit of -2. Successful saving throws vs breath weapon will avoid these effects.

The source of the Blackscum is a hot volcanic spring at the base of the cliffs (3a). Long beneath the sea, this is now above the current sea level. The relatively clean water that bubbles forth is rapidly fouled by the unclean plants and algae that live in the pools of the Blackscum.

There are no creatures and few birds on the western banks of the Blackscum, and the gnolls rarely venture across into the mangroves there. The lack of animal life is due to a marsh variety of giant sundews that have managed to take over this entire area of the Brinegrove. Every round that the characters are to the west of the Blackscum there is a 3 in 6 chance of encountering one or more of these foul plants.

1 or more giant sundews: AC 7; MV 1"; HD 8; hp 60 each; #AT up to 6 tendrils on each opponent within 5 feet; D 1-3; SA Sap — 1 point of damage per attached tendril, victim at -1 to hit if 3 tendrils are attached, -2 if 6 tendrils, on a 20 tendril is across nose and mouth; SD Missile and fire attacks do half damage, sap can only be removed with alcohol or vinegar; Int Semi; AL N; Size M; xp 1675 each; THACO 12; MM2 p116.

For the purposes of this adventure there are an unlimited number of giant sundews in this area of the Brinegrove. None, however, have any treasure beyond an odd trinket (worth 30gp at most) from a past gnoll victim.

4. The Eastern Boundary - The Ditch and Beyond...

Between the lagoon and the rank saltwater pool that lies to the east of the Brinegrove, the gnolls have dug a ditch (4a), some 5-6 feet deep along its entire length, and nowhere less than 20 feet wide. The ditch is half full of stinking green-grey mud, which disguises the real danger of the ditch — the fact that it is lined with sharp stakes.

To each side of the ditch the trees have been cut back to root level, so there is little chance of a character inadvertently falling into the ditch. However, if a character jumps onto what appears to be the bottom of the ditch (the layer of mud 3 feet below the edge) he or she may be impaled on the stakes hidden below the surface. The stakes should be treated as a THACO 10, D 1-3 attack. Any wound from the stake will cause an agonising itching sensation (the victim is at -1 to hit, but no further damage) due to the effects of the mud. This lasts until the wound is washed with clean water or healed. Characters who carefully lower themselves into the ditch will suffer no such attack.

The ditch is not to keep the characters within the hunting grounds of the gnolls, but to exclude the broobie birds that dwell to the east. These birds range freely to the east of the ditch and the saltwater pools, but never venture into the gnolls' hunting area or go near the old cliff line.

Once in the broobies' territory the characters are fair game for the birds. They will be attacked after 1-6 melee rounds by a pair of flightless broobies and, if they remain (alive) in the broobies' territory, by another pair 1-6 rounds after the fight with the first pair has ended.

4 (flightless) broobie birds: AC 5; MV 15"; HD 9; hp 50 each; #AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/2-16; SA Surprises 2 in 6; SD Immune to poison; Int Animal; AL N; Size L; xp 1500; THACO 12; MM2 p20.

None of the broobie birds has any treasure.

5. The Log Trap

At this point the track rises slightly over a hummock of tangled roots and weeds and passes into an avenue of tall creeper-clad mangroves. It is here that Mad Rollo (see Encounter 6) has prepared a small surprise for any intrusive gnoll neighbours....

Hidden in the undergrowth is a length of fine wire, wrapped with weeds and creepers less than 1 inch above the ground — the trigger mechanism for a pair of swinging logs. There is a 80% chance that anyone passing over this wire will disturb it and trigger the trap. However, should the character at the front of the group make an Intelligence ability check (the DM should roll the die) he or she will spot a gleam from the wire. After this, any character who manages to make a dexterity ability check (rolled on 3d6) will be able to avoid triggering the trap.

Should the wire be disturbed, the character unfortunate enough to have released the trap will hear a slight 'whoosh' as the trap is set off. Seconds later a pair of logs, suspended on thick ropes, will swing out of the gloom on either side of the path. They are hung so as to meet end-to-end above the wire, crushing whatever — or whoever — is caught between them, causing 3-24 points of damage in the process. The character who activated the log trap is entitled to make a dexterity ability check. Should this be successful the character will only suffer 1-8 points of damage from a grazing impact by one of the logs.

6. Mad Rollo (and Arnolds)

The DM should read the following to the players at this point:

> Struggling on the path ahead of you is a most peculiar figure. Dressed almost in mockery of a wizard, a high pointed hat perched on his head and stained robes trailing in the mud, the spindly figure is struggling to pull something free of the undergrowth. Suddenly the man notices you and, with a manic grin, he starts down the path towards you.
>
> As he reaches you he licks his finger and raises it into the air, sniffs the breeze and then gazes at the sky. A dead fish dangles on a piece of string tied round his wrist.
>
> 'That time of year again, eh?' he says, and breaks into a fit of giggles.

It is this man, Rollo ('Some call me Mad Rollo, you know. But Rollo's not mad, not yet...'), who set the log trap (Encounter 5) to discourage the gnolls from taking too close an interest in 'his part of the Brinegrove'. Rollo will be most apologetic if any of the characters have been injured by the trap and will insist — regardless of whether the characters are wounded or not — that they all go to his house for rest and healing. Rollo will make a point of mentioning, with an enforced casual air, that he is a wizard, and can probably help in some small way. Rollo will not take kindly to a refusal of his offer, assuming that the characters are too proud to be seen with him, but he will not resort to violence.

Mad Rollo: AC 6; MV 9"; MU 4; hp 12; #AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD Spells — **magic missile, shocking grasp** (x2), **scare, web**; AL CN; Size M; xp 225; THACO 18; S 9, I 13, W 10, C 10, D 17 (+2/-3), Ch 12; wears **ring of protection +1**, armed with **dagger +2**, will use **wand of magic missiles** if one of characters touched it.

Rollo knows all about the gnolls, the Feast of R'r'rib'ett and why the gnolls leave him alone — after all, he is a mighty wizard. The gnolls, so he claims, fear him because he killed many of them when they attacked him and stole one of his pet fish. 'Arnold, it was... Poor old Arnold... I think they *ate* him, barbarous creatures!'. After recounting this sorry tale Rollo will also introduce the fish on the piece of string as Arnold, despite the fact that this latest Arnold is quite dead and rather battered after being dragged along the path.

The gnolls leave Rollo alone, but only as a matter of prudence. They believe that he did manage to kill one of their number with wizardry. It was actually a coincidence, in that a gas bubble ruptured at the moment Rollo was waving his arms about. As a result of this the gnolls take the (not unreasonable) view that anyone who lives by himself in the middle of a hostile swamp must be powerful.

Rollo's shack (6a) is a hovel on stilts, built from driftwood, bits of canvas and old ships' timbers. A 60-foot length of rusty chain tied to one of the stilts restrains Arnold, Rollo's crocodile.

The inside of the shack is surprisingly clean and dry, and well stocked with dried fish, which hang from every available inch of the rafters. In one corner there is a small bed, covered in a heap of jumbled blankets. The only other furnishings are three chairs grouped around a table made from a sea chest. There is a small candle stuck to the table. Pride of place goes to a framed, mildewed Certificate of Licentiate Membership of the Guild of Wizards that hangs on the wall.

Rollo will offer each character a piece of dried fish, after carefully covering the late fishy Arnold with the bedclothes because 'he is very sensitive about relatives being eaten in front of him.' He will then sort through the contents of the sea chest, until he finds a large glass bottle. He will insist that each of the characters has a mouthful from the bottle, and will become suspicious of them if they refuse. The bottle holds ten doses of a weak **potion of healing** (pale blue, tastes of nutmeg) each of which will cure 2 points of damage.

The other contents of the chest are the mixed rubbish that Rollo has picked up over the years: several sheets of blank paper, a goose quill, a small bag of mixed coins (worth 25gp in total), a cut crystal decanter (worth 50gp), a bottle of fine wine (30gp), two wooden drinking cups, a knife, a box of fish-hooks and fishing line, his spell book (which contains only the four spells he has memorised) and, wrapped in a piece of cloth, a small rag doll and a **wand of magic missiles** (6 charges). The command words for the wand, *Fire, strike home* are written on a small scrap of paper tied to the wand.

If the characters take their leave in a peaceable fashion after being given the dried fish and the potion Rollo will look crestfallen. He will, however, see the necessity of their departure and wish them good luck in their escape. Should the characters give Rollo anything in payment he will be overjoyed, especially if it is shiny and attractive.

Should any of the characters touch any of Rollo's possessions, particularly the rag doll, he will grow angry. He will grab whatever the characters have touched and then demand that they leave, if necessary pushing them out of his shack. As soon as they are outside Rollo will rush over to Arnold the Crocodile and release him. He will then cast his **web** spell at the party, followed by a **magic missile** and a **scare** or **shocking grasp** as the DM feels appropriate.

Arnold the Crocodile: AC 5; MV 6"//12"; HD 3; hp 20; #AT 2; D 2-8/1-12; Int Animal; AL N; Size L; xp 140; THACO 16; MM p15.

7. The Mound and the Muck

At this point the Blackscum divides into a main channel and a stagnant and stinking blind channel. On the northern bank of this inlet a small group of muckdwellers have recently established a colony. The muckdwellers have not yet been bothered by the gnolls — although they have managed to kill one or two of the younger, more adventurous ones who strayed into their newfound territory. As a result they are confident enough to spend most of their time warming themselves on the banks of the river and sporting in the water, safe under the protective eye of their ruler, a large lizardman.

Unless the characters have made an excessive amount of noise within one hex of the the muckdwellers' lair (fighting with one of the groups given in the **Events** section, for example), the muckdwellers will be automatically surprised by the characters' appearance. They and the lizardman will flee into the Blackscum, leaving their treasure and eggs behind, only to return 4 melee rounds later and attack without mercy, fear or regard for casualties. There is nothing to stop the characters examining the muckdwellers nest mound during this period if they wish to do so. If the player characters have left the site of the lair the muckdwellers and the lizardman will pursue them and then attack.

1 lizardman: AC 5; MV 6"//12"; HD 2+1; hp 17; #AT 3; D 1-2/1-2/1-8; Int Ave; AL N; Size L; xp 86; THACO 16; MM p62.
13 muckdwellers: AC 6; MV 3"//12"; HD 1-4hp; hp 3 each; #AT 1; D 1-2; SA Water jet; Int Ave; AL LE; Size S; xp 10 each; THACO 2[illegible] MM2 p93.

The muckdwellers have built a mound of sticks, roots and mud as a nest at the waterside. On top of this mound are the treasures that the muckdwellers have managed to collect: a silver brooch (worth 50gp), coins of various types and nations (worth 165gp), a small ruby earring (worth 150gp) and a small steel box, polished to a mirror finish. Inside the box on a bed of soft velvet are three sealed glass vials and the broken remains of a fourth. The three vials contain a one dose of a **potion of heroism** (grey, tastes of old cheese), two doses of a **potion of plant control** (yellow, tastes of freshly cut grass) and one application of ghast ichor essence. This last item is an ointment to be rubbed into the skin. Once this is done it has exactly the same effects as a ghast's carrion stench — all within 10' must make a saving throw vs poison or suffer from nausea and retching. The ichor's effects last for 5-20 rounds, but the wearer is not affected.

Buried in the mound are a clutch of 27 muckdweller eggs.

8. The Lurker Below

Around the edge of the mangrove trees the line of the trail becomes indistinct and marked only by skull-topped stakes set at irregular intervals and odd angles. The other swamp vegetation is thinner than normal here, as this path has been beaten open by a muddigger.

This creature now lurks just below the surface of the mud of the swamp, some 25 yards beyond the tree line. It will wait until 1-4 characters have passed over it before it attacks.

Muddigger: AC 3/7; MV 3"; HD 4; hp 16; #AT 1; D 1-8 + victim's AC; SA Drowning in mud; Int Semi; AL N; Size L; xp 229; THACO 15; wet environment version of dustdigger, MM2 p61.

In a similar manner to its desert cousin, the muddigger digs a hole, covers itself with a layer of mud and then inflates itself to fill the hole it has made. When a creature walks on top of the muddiger it deflates and folds its five arms around its prey, causing damage by constriction each round. Its victim is trapped and cannot attack, and unless helped quickly will die in 3 melee rounds, drowned by the mud and water that the muddigger has scooped up with the character. Its outer hide is tough and rubbery (AC 3), but its inner skin is only AC 7.

The muddigger has little treasure, save two indigestible morsels that have become stuck in its maw. These are a golden arm torc of fine workmanship (worth 125gp) and an **anklet of water walking** (the functional equivalent of a **ring of water walking**). For the purposes of this adventure, the anklet will allow the character wearing it to ignore the effects of areas of quicksand, but not gas bubbles (see **The Brinegrove Swamp**).

9. The Rotten Ship

The DM should read the following to the players:

> Rising from the reeds is a disconcerting sight — a ship's mast. A tattered and faded banner, the skull crest just visible, flaps at the mast head.
>
> The hull is rotted and badly holed, but the remains of a once proud war galley are visible yet, half buried in the mire and weeds of the Brinegrove.
>
> Above the taffrail looms a human face, now no longer human...

The ship is the home of what remains of its crew, who ran aground nearly a century ago. These unfortunates are now zombies, cursed never to find rest. They will emerge from the largest hole in the side of their ship and advance towards the characters, armed with cutlasses and belaying pins, a ghastly parody of a press gang.

10 zombies: AC 8; MV 6"; HD 2; hp 12 each; #AT 1; D 1-8 or by weapon; Int Non; AL N; Size M; xp 44 each; THACO 16; armed with cutlasses (treat as scimitars D 1-8) and belaying pins (D 1-3); MM p103.

Each of the zombies wears an earring in the shape of a small silver skull (worth 5gp each due to the superior workmanship).

The leader of the zombies — dressed in a faded blue coat and a torn tricorne hat — has the remains of a parrot riding on one shoulder. This unnatural bird will launch itself into the attack as soon as it is able.

1 undead parrot: AC 8; MV 0"; HD 1-1; hp 6; #AT 1; D 1-2/round; SA Leap 3"; SD Cannot be turned, needs magical or silver weapons to hit, immune to electrical attacks; Int Non; AL N; Size S; xp 15; THACO 20; special monster.

This ex-parrot cannot fly or move itself about properly. It attacks by leaping at a victim and attaching itself with its claws (should it miss, it falls to the ground and is stunned for 1 melee round while it re-orientates for the next attack). Once attached, it tears at its victim with its beak, automatically causing 1-2 points of damage.

Within the hull of the ship the internal deck has fallen away into the mud below. A large intact sea chest rests unsteadily in the crook of the ship's timbers. Anyone touching this chest should make a dexterity ability check, failure indicating that the chest has shifted and fallen through the remains of the ships planking, taking the character with it and causing 1-6 points of damage.

Within the chest are three bags of coins (2000gp, 1500sp and 30pp), several suits of fine, but rotted clothing, a gold chased astrolabe (worth 200gp), a bottle containing two doses of a **potion of fish control** (white with blue streaks, tastes salty; cf other potions of control, except that this one works for all fish, but not the land lampreys, 11 below) and a flask containing one dose of a **potion of speed** (bluish green, tastes of fresh apples).

The other contents — and the fabric — of the ship are unsalvageable, save for some of the ship's ropes, in all a total of some 100 feet of stout, tarred hemp rope.

10. Flitting Things

The DM should read the following to the players:

> This area of the mangroves is darker and uglier than most. The ground is slightly higher here and somewhat drier, thanks to the huge thickness of the roots, but away from the path the trees are impenetrable and linked by thick curtains of creepers and vines.
>
> From above comes a heavy fluttering sound, and a fat, repulsive moth, nearly eight feet across, swoops towards your faces.

The creature is a gravid female gloomwing, seeking a place to lay her eggs, and the characters — once dead — will suit her purposes admirably. She will attack until she has only 10 hit points remaining, and then flee in search of easier prey.

1 gloomwing: AC 1; MV 0"/12"; HD 5+1; hp 20; #AT 3; D 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA Pheremone; SD Confusion; Int Animal; AL N; Size M (8' wingspan); xp 645; THACO 15; MM2 p70.

A gloomwing's pheremone causes an exposed creature to suffer a loss of 1 strength point per round of exposure (after the second round) unless a saving throw vs poison is made. Lost points are restored in 1-4 turns. Furthermore, the pheremone will also attract other gloomwings in the

vicinity (in this case another gloomwing will arrive after 3 melee rounds if the first is still engaged in combat). If viewed squarely from above, the disruptive patterns on a gloomwing's body and wings will cause **confusion** unless a save vs spells is made.

The gloomwings have no treasure.

11. Wriggly Little Suckers

The DM should read out the following to the players at this point:

> The Swamps seem to be endless sea of mud, reeds and more mud, but at least the cliffs are close now. The silence of the swamps is broken only by an occasional bird call or a rustle of leaves.
>
> Suddenly, from a somewhere ahead, comes a thrashing sound and a high-pitched wailing. Then the swamp sinks into silence once more.

Two rounds after this — the sound of a lone gnoll falling victim to a group of land lampreys — the characters will be attacked. The lampreys will slither out of the reeds some 30' away from the characters and head purposefully towards them, intent on a better meal than a mere gnoll.

9 land lampreys: AC 7; MV 12"; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; #AT 1; D 1 hp/round; SA drain blood, encumber; Int Non; AL N; Size S; xp 50 each; THACO 18; MM2 p80.

Land lampreys fasten themselves onto a victim (a hit for 1 point of damage and then drain a further 1 hit point of blood for 3 successive rounds. They will only release their toothy hold if killed or exposed to fire. In addition, each land lamprey attached to a character will cause a loss of 1 point of dexterity while it is so attached.

The lampreys have no treasure. However, some 50 yards away there lies the body of the lampreys' first victim, a gnoll. The body is badly battered and torn, but 10 gp, a non-magical scimitar and a large **shield +1** lie scattered in the weeds nearby.

12. Climbing the Cliff

The cliff line was once vertical, but over the years it has weathered until the rock face is now at a steep angle and piled with rubble. The tops of the cliffs are roughly 80 feet above the level of the Brinegrove.

When all the characters have reached the top of the cliff the DM should read out the following:

> The Brinegrove lies below you, and ahead stretches a forest of pleasant oak and elm trees. Small flowers cover the ground, and the scent of the wood is wholesome and uplifting. Birds are singing in the distance, and a bumble bee buzzes from flower to flower.
>
> A young man, dressed in fine hunting leathers and a feathered head-dress is standing in the trees. He smiles at you, then turns and shouts into the forest.
>
> *'Father! Look what's turned up for dinner...'*

Thus ends The Great Paladin Hunt....

PLAYER CHARACTERS

The DM should allow player characters to take only the equipment listed at the start of the adventure, although weaponry and equipment found during the adventure may, of course, be used.

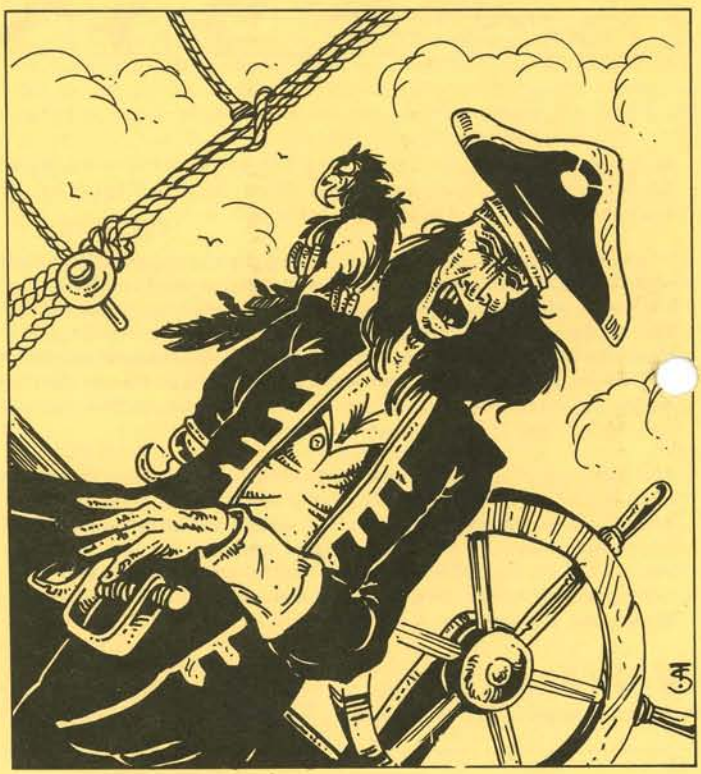
Lady Yezebel Vambrace-Nybble, Paladin-at-Arms to His Grace the Bishop of Gruun, Little Sister of the Axe and Sword Bearer.
AC -2; MV 9"; Paladin 2; hp 14; #AT 1; D by weapon; AL LG; Size M; THACO 20; S 14, I 10, W 13, C 15 (+1), D 18 (+3/-4), Ch 18 (+40%/+35%); wears field plate (AC2); proficient with broadsword, lance and crossbow; equipment: small silver holy symbol on neck chain, collapsible silver drinking cup (worth 10gp).

Sir Heronimous Winchester-Bascinet, Baronet of Ferpess, Protector and Reclaimer of Fallen Ladies, Giver of Justice, Hammer of Unbelievers and Sword Bearer.
AC 3; MV 9"; Paladin 3; hp 21; #AT 1; D by weapon; AL LG; Size M; THACO 18; S 15, I 11, W 14, C 15 (+1), D 10, Ch 17 (+30%/+30%); wears plate mail (AC3); proficient with longsword, two-handed sword, scimitar; equipment: small belt pouch, vial of holy water.

Duarte Xavier Rodrigez, Lord Gorget-Epron of Dorgranitte, Most High Knight of the Tower and Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Honourary Master of the Ancient, Noble and Hidden Order of Wig Makers, Sword Bearer.
AC 2; MV 9"; Paladin 3; hp ; #AT 1; D by weapon; AL LG; Size M; THACO 18; S 16 (-/+1), I 9, W 13, C 16 (+2), D 16 (+1/-2), Ch 17 (+30%/+30%); wears badly damaged plate armour (AC 4); proficent with longsword, horseman's flail, crossbow; equipment: clean, dry socks used as helmet liner.

His Nobility Pisces Byte-Greaves, Paladin-Puissant of the Lists, Defender of Cleanliness, Heriditary Master of the Gruun Hunt, Chamber-Master of the Armoury, Sword Bearer, Shield Thane, Mace Holder, Lance Carrier and Bowyer-at-Arms.
AC 3; MV 12"; Paladin 2; hp 18; #AT 1; D by weapon; AL LG; Size M; THACO 19; S 17 (+1/+1), I 12, W 13, C 17 (+3), D 18 (+3/-4), Ch 18 (+40%/+35%); wears remnants of chainmail (AC 6); proficent with broadsword, battleaxe, dagger; equipment: darning needle and thread.

Koddlyng
AC 0; MV 9"; Paladin 4; hp 26; #AT 1; D by weapon; AL LG; Size M; THACO 17; S 18/01 (+1/+3), I 13, W 16 (+2), C 14, D 17 (+2/-3), Ch 18 (+40%/+35%); wears pristine field plate (AC 2); proficient with longsword, crossbow, hand or throwing axe, dagger; equipment: bent dagger (D 1-3), mildewed wooden holy symbol on piece of rope.



Credits

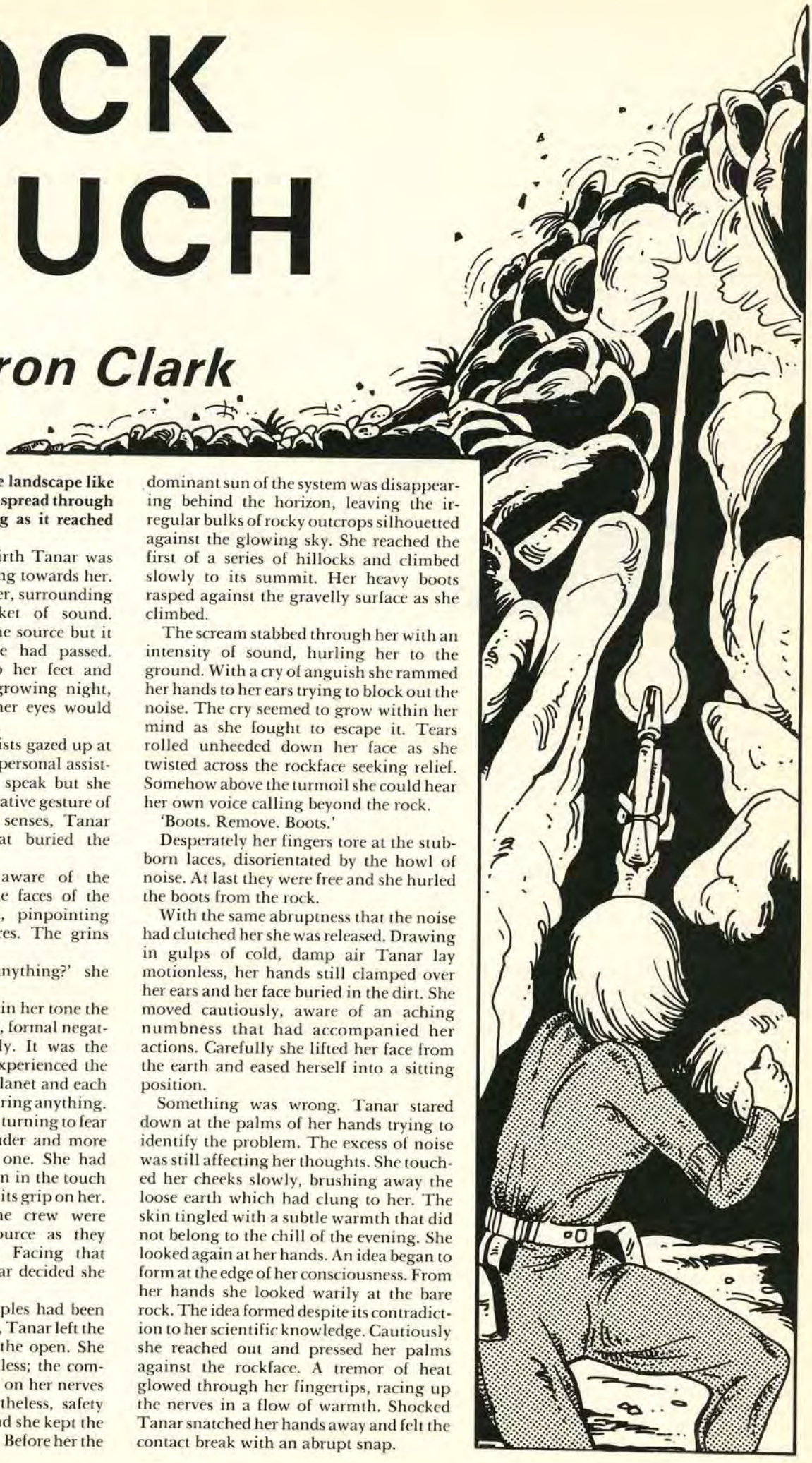
(or 'I refuse to answer on the grounds that I may incriminate myself.')

The following people are not now, nor have ever been, members of the Paladin Party or its front organisations, or associated with members of the Paladin Party....

ritten (with Arnold, the red crayon) by **mike brunton**
illos... ilustre... pikt.... art by tim sell
catog... kartto... maps by keith cooper

ROCK TOUCH

by Sharon Clark



The groan rolled across the landscape like a ripple on a lake. Slowly it spread through the irregular terrain, dying as it reached out.

Within seconds of its birth Tanar was aware of its presence moving towards her. Too quickly it was upon her, surrounding her senses with a blanket of sound. Urgently she probed for the source but it was too late. The ripple had passed. Hurriedly she climbed to her feet and peered intently into the growing night, hoping irrationally that her eyes would catch the tail of the tremor.

Her team of field geologists gazed up at her in surprise. Grant, her personal assistant, opened his mouth to speak but she silenced him with an imperative gesture of her hands. Straining her senses, Tanar drank in the silence that buried the disturbance.

Suddenly she became aware of the amused expressions on the faces of the team. She glared around, pinpointing individuals with cold stares. The grins dropped quickly.

'Didn't anybody feel anything?' she demanded.

Warned by the sharpness in her tone the crew answered with a polite, formal negative. Tanar sighed inwardly. It was the fourth time that she had experienced the groaning cries of the new planet and each time the crew had denied hearing anything. Now her initial surprise was turning to fear as each cry had grown louder and more intense than the previous one. She had almost tasted a physical pain in the touch of the last cry, so intense was its grip on her.

She was afraid that the crew were drawing nearer to the source as they surveyed the new planet. Facing that source was something Tanar decided she would rather avoid.

As soon as the day's samples had been catalogued and packed away, Tanar left the camp and headed out into the open. She felt uncharacteristically restless; the company of the crew had grated on her nerves throughout the day. Nevertheless, safety was foremost in her mind and she kept the camp's lights clearly in view. Before her the dominant sun of the system was disappearing behind the horizon, leaving the irregular bulks of rocky outcrops silhouetted against the glowing sky. She reached the first of a series of hillocks and climbed slowly to its summit. Her heavy boots rasped against the gravelly surface as she climbed.

The scream stabbed through her with an intensity of sound, hurling her to the ground. With a cry of anguish she rammed her hands to her ears trying to block out the noise. The cry seemed to grow within her mind as she fought to escape it. Tears rolled unheeded down her face as she twisted across the rockface seeking relief. Somehow above the turmoil she could hear her own voice calling beyond the rock.

'Boots. Remove. Boots.'

Desperately her fingers tore at the stubborn laces, disorientated by the howl of noise. At last they were free and she hurled the boots from the rock.

With the same abruptness that the noise had clutched her she was released. Drawing in gulps of cold, damp air Tanar lay motionless, her hands still clamped over her ears and her face buried in the dirt. She moved cautiously, aware of an aching numbness that had accompanied her actions. Carefully she lifted her face from the earth and eased herself into a sitting position.

Something was wrong. Tanar stared down at the palms of her hands trying to identify the problem. The excess of noise was still affecting her thoughts. She touched her cheeks slowly, brushing away the loose earth which had clung to her. The skin tingled with a subtle warmth that did not belong to the chill of the evening. She looked again at her hands. An idea began to form at the edge of her consciousness. From her hands she looked warily at the bare rock. The idea formed despite its contradiction to her scientific knowledge. Cautiously she reached out and pressed her palms against the rockface. A tremor of heat glowed through her fingertips, racing up the nerves in a flow of warmth. Shocked Tanar snatched her hands away and felt the contact break with an abrupt snap.

The air shifted around her as if a crowd had brushed past. The atmosphere grew tense and heavy. Almost at once Tanar was aware of a feeling of regret. It was as if she had harmed somebody with calculated ease and now it was too late to repay the hurt. The oppressive emotion weighed down on her, bringing tears to her eyes. She shook her head, trying to throw off the feeling. Part of her was still aware of her position, sitting alone on the rock. She was being manipulated and, with a thrill of fear, she realised she was powerless to escape. Curiously she watched as her hand lifted

itself from her lap, then with a growing sense of horror she sat transfixed as it reached down to the surface of the rock. As her fingers brushed against the crystalline surface she broke through the physical lassitude. In desperation she tried to pull away but her muscles were locked. Her palm dropped flat against the surface and the contact gripped her. With one final effort Tanar allowed herself to sink into the consciousness of the alien rock.

Tanar awoke, shivering with cold. She tried to turn, hoping to ease the cramp which gnawed at her. Solid rock grazed against her skin. She peered up, noticing the grey stone inches from her face and feeling it hard against her back.

Painfully she twisted her body around until at last she was looking out of the narrow crevice in which she was tightly wedged. She stared out across the landscape, her eyes straining in the dim light of early morning. Where on earth was she? Slowly she worked her way free, her cramped muscles protesting at every movement. With a final effort she pushed herself out and toppled to the ground.

She lay still, allowing the pins and needles to run their course over her. Memory of her whereabouts eluded her as she pulled herself to her feet. There was something familiar about the rock face but she could not remember what. She felt chilled to the bone and incredibly weary. She stretched lavishly, studying the alien landscape around her.

Camp! She whirled round in sudden panic as the thought hit her. To her relief the lights of the generator were flickering brightly. Memory began to seep back. A walk, she thought. I came out for a walk and then... She looked at the narrow crevice. I must have fallen asleep and... She shook her head in confusion. Glancing up she saw the sun was rising quickly above the horizon. She glanced once more at the crevice then started to jog towards the camp, grateful for the warmth the exercise gave her.

'Where have you been?' demanded Grant angrily as she arrived on the camp's perimeter, 'You were missing all night. I didn't know whether to send out a search party or whether you'd done it on purpose.'

'You should have assumed that I was lost,' snapped Tanar, 'Don't they teach you anything in field school these days?'

'They teach us not to leave camp alone,' retorted Grant.

Tanar opened her mouth to speak, then changed her mind. In his present mood Grant would not understand the unexplained events of the night.

'You're lucky to be alive,' Grant continued, staring at her suspiciously. 'It was below zero last night, you know.'

Tanar watched him stride away, his words adding to her confusion. Now that she was back in camp she felt no effects from her night in the open, yet if Grant was telling the truth she should be experiencing third degree exposure. She pushed the problem from her mind. She felt fine and she had to get the crew out into the field.

'OK? Everybody ready?' Tanar swung quickly into her morning routine. 'Today we are heading along the western trajectory and then doubling back on ourselves five kilometres northwards. So by nightfall we should be over there.'

Tanar pointed to their destination, realising as she did so that they would end the day approximately by the rock where she had woken.

'Tanar?'

She shook her head realising she had drifted into thought.

'Sorry, team. Right. Today's assignments will be as follows...'

The day dragged by slowly as the crew worked through the routines of geological surveying. Even with recent advances in technical analysis much of the initial field classification was still done by eye. A mobile analytical unit gave the team an instant chemical breakdown of the bulk of the rock but the mineral composition was left to human judgement. Each outcrop was carefully mapped by hand before the co-ordinates were locked into the field computer's memory. As Tanar had forecast it was nearly dusk when they reached the final outcrop.

'Last one for today,' said Grant with relief, 'I'll get a fresh specimen.'

He pulled his handlaser from his belt and strode to the outcrop intending to slice off a clean surface.

'Wait a minute!' Tanar ran to catch up with him, driven by a sudden impulse to prevent him from cutting into the rock. She stooped down and picked up a large boulder which was lying loose.

'This will do.'

Grant stared at her in disbelief.

'Are you serious?' he asked, 'You know that loose rock isn't supposed to be representative. Come on, Tanar, even a zero-candidate knows that.'

'Yes. Of course.' Tanar dropped the boulder and held out her hand for the handlaser, 'I'll finish off here. You go and start camp.'

Grant studied her carefully, weighing the new lines of tension on her face.

'I don't think you're well, Tanar. Go and rest. Perhaps you should have a word with control.'

Without waiting for her to reply Grant turned to the rockface and slashed the brilliant white laser beam through the surface.

Tanar heard the scream erupt from her lungs as the pain resonated through her. She launched herself towards the cause of her agony, dragging Grant to the ground. For an instant she recognised the lasergun in his hand then another wave of pain struck her and she cried out again. In desperation she rolled across the dirt, clinging to Grant, trying to burn out the threatening darkness.

Above crashing waves of sound she could hear her name being called, repeated continuously in frantic pitches. Hands pulled her back, forcing her to fight against their restraint with a wild fury. She felt an arm lock around her throat, cutting off the air from her body; then there was the taste of blood in her mouth as she bit into flesh. Abruptly she was thrown against raw rock. Cold crystal jarred against her skin, breaking into her nightmare. The touch held her, washing away the anger and the pain. As she ceased to struggle against the hold the darkness flooded over her, removing the image of her destruction.

Pulsating rhythm echoed through Tanar's mind, forming coloured shapes of sound which drifted away into the envelope of black silence around her. She clawed her way through an intangible world seeking for a reality to cling to. Terror rose and died and the rhythm went on.

Dadah,. tadh, tadh, tanah, tanar .... Tanar!

She sensed her name rather than heard it and became aware of its steady beat being caught up by other tones and voices around her. She tried to turn towards the name but was trapped in a directionless void.

'I hear you,' she cried, 'I hear you.'

Sensations swooped down on her with hungry claws as the alien consciousness leapt at her response. She fell into the touch of the rock unable to resist the strength of its contact. Deeper and deeper she was

drawn into the inner world, touching the ways of a life form which did not share her senses. In one incredible instant she was transformed into a world of silicon intelligence. She breathed the same white fire of living diamonds and tasted the flame of a thousand sapphires. Vast crystalline structures danced in honour to her, displaying a rainbow of emotions like a kaleidoscope.

At last she was released from the inward pull and with relief she drew away from the touch. She felt awed by the scenes that had played before her. Beauty from another world still filled her thoughts. For an instant she wanted to run, to forget the wonders that could never exist in her life but the creature was waiting. She had been within the inner veil of an alien culture and now she was required to return the experience. As she comprehended the intentions of the rock she felt panic seize her. The grip grew tighter around her and Tanar realised that she had nowhere to run to.

Half forgotten memories floated through her mind. She remembered her mother; a tall boisterous woman with a flare for physics. Her father's face focused sharply before her; his fine features so like her own. She cried as a baby in her parents arms, learned to walk and talk; growing in strength and intelligence. Piece by piece she relived her life, recalling bad and good with a frightening clarity. She was at once watching and living the memories.

Tanar rested, sipping the cool silence, aware of the mind which waited beyond the shadows. The sharing was over and she could sense the alien's unsureness. She longed to reach out to him. She realised that she had assigned a human gender to him without thinking. I have lived with you, she thought. Speak to me. I need you.

She felt calmness brush against her nerves, removing the last traces of tension that clung to her. Images floated through her mind as the creature sought a new form of communication. Eagerly she reached towards them. With a suddenness, as if a sheet of ice had suddenly shattered, the images broke away.

'Tanar. Oh, Tanar. What have we done?'

'We are one. Can you not feel the bond?'

'It must be broken. How foolish. Forgive me, Tanar.'

'I don't understand,' Tanar's voice betrayed her anxiety. 'What is there to forgive?'

'I sought you out. I wanted to learn about this creature that I found on the surface of my world. I didn't realise what the linking of our lives would mean. Tanar, please...'

'Stop it! We are one now. I want...'

'No. I have seen. Your people seek after my kind for wealth. Minerals to you are power and money. To me they are body and life.'

'No. We use rocks not... They have no feelings. They don't live like you.'

'Your people cannot see, Tanar. Only you could I touch. My people must withdraw from yours. Tanar, forgive me. I have shown you a paradise in which we cannot live. Forgive me.'

Dazed, Tanar stared at the face of the rock before her. Around her lay the unconscious bodies of her companions. They seemed unharmed. For the first time she felt free of the alien presence. Tears welled in her eyes as she felt the depth of her loss. It was as if somebody had removed all her most treasured memories. The emptiness grew hollower as she remained by the rock. At last she threw herself against its surface. It felt cold and lifeless to her touch.

'Listen,' she sobbed, 'I can tell them. I'll make them realise. There must be others who can touch you. Please. Don't leave me.'

Around her the field crew began to stir.

'Speak to me,' she implored the alien. 'They'll think I'm...'

Mad, she thought. Was that what the creature had seen. Her story would appear insane to those who could not feel the touch. She was aware as she turned to face the crew of the faintest tremor beneath her feet. Suddenly she recognised the danger that faced her and the men.

With one final caress she pushed herself from the rock and ran to Grant's side. He gazed up at her, his eyes focusing slowly.

'We have to get away from here,' she said urgently, 'There is going to be one heck of an earthquake.'

Sharon Clark

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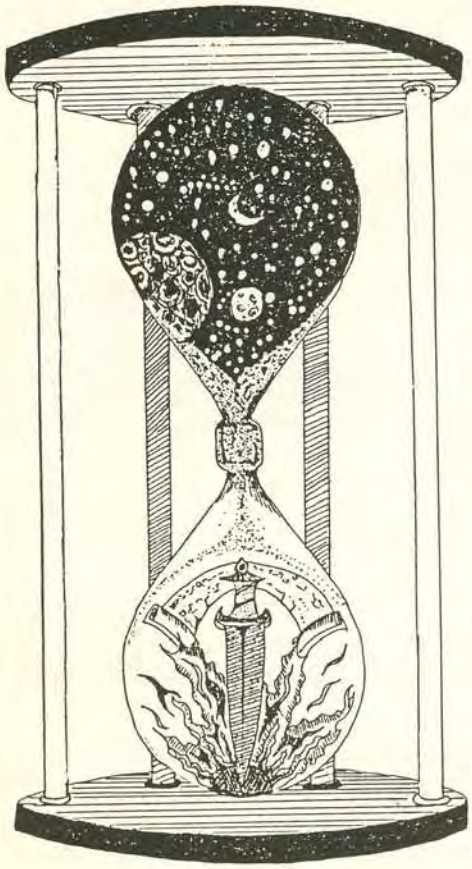

Peering through the coarse bracken we view the only bridge across the river. Alas, how do we deal with that encampment of fearsome creatures squatting and snarling their curses to unknown ears! A fight breaks out, giving our warriors an opportunity to charge forward! Too late, the creatures rally themselves for the ensuing awesome fight, but being overwhelmed they flee in confusion — the bridge is ours!
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ILLUMINATIONS

Real-Time Role-Playing

Until recently, **Treasure Trap** was virtually a synonym for play-it-for-real type games, in which participants dress as fantasy characters and play out adventures in suitable settings such as (in the case of TT) an old castle.

This has proved to be a popular concept and so, naturally, other organisations are developing the idea. One such is **Timescape**. They are going to run what they call Real Time Role-Playing Adventure holidays in Leicester this year. Not the place one would automatically bring to mind in association with holidays of romance and adventure, but doubtless there are good reasons for choosing it. Starting in July, you can book in for a week of real time, full size role-playing. Your task would be to pursue a super villain through time, starting in a medieval fantasy world (set in a suitable sylvan setting of park and wooded glades), continuing through a 1920s setting (in the many tunnels beneath Leicester railway station!), and ending in an sf finale (featuring a computer controlled space flight/combat simulator). The price will be from £100 + VAT, covering accommodation and meals.

Judging the Pace

A few catalogues have come into our possession from three of the more active games producers in the USA. One of them is a small outfit called TSR Inc, and next month we'll be able to give you a rather more thorough preview of some of the new ideas coming from Lake Geneva in the rest of the year.

But let's quickly glimpse through the catalogues of Mayfair Games and Pacesetter. Mayfair have come a long way very quickly, and now brand themselves as 'The Licensing Specialists'. They back this up with a range of interesting titles, starting with the **DC Heroes Superpowers Role-Playing Game**, an obvious competitor to you-know-who. The main set has an Introduction, Solitaire Adventure, Players' Book, GM's Book, a Teen Titans Adventure, a GM's Screen, 30 character cards, counters and dice (phew!). It must have the same sort of appeal to those fans of Superman and Wonder Woman as the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES™** game has had for the Spidey brigade. A Reference Guide, Teen Titans adventure, Justice League of America adventure, a Batman Sourcebook and a Solitaire adventure will all follow this year.

They are also expanding the range of the **Role Aids** modules by publishing modules taken from the campaign of Dave Arneson, co-creator of the **D&D** game. **The Blackmoor Chronicles** will number 12 scenarios in the first year, and other Role Aids modules will appear every month.

Passing swiftly over the **Barbara Cartland Romance** boardgame.... we find the **Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine Game**, and SF games based on **The Forever War**, **Downbelow Station** and **Hammer's Slammers**. There's the **Sanctuary** boardgame based upon Asprin's **Thieves' World**; **Elfquest**; **The Worlds of Boris Vallejo**; **Dragonriders of Pern** and two games not a million miles removed from **Railway Rivals**.

That little lot made the Pacesetter catalogue look a little tame, but you can't ignore a company that has managed **Chill** and **Timemaster** in the first year. Also on show was an SF rpg, **Star Ace**, and the new **Bard's Legacy** rpg which is supposedly playable in minutes. Where have we heard that recently?

Test of Wits

The Chaosium are one of the few companies whose games are both superbly produced and also attractive to the experienced gamer. The transfer of their top-selling game, **Runequest**, to Avalon Hill, does not seem to have had any detrimental effect on their output. On the contrary, they now have a healthy stable of rpgs, popular with the dedicated hobbyist. Admittedly they're also saddled with a handful of rather geriatric boardgames and miniatures rules that can only occasionally trouble the cash register. Presumably they keep them on for sentimental reasons. Anyway, back to the all-important rpgs where we find that recent releases include a **Companion** which introduces new Hominids, Adventures, Artifacts and Aliens to the **Ringworld** game (reviewed #21) which is based on Larry Niven's truly original series of books. **Trouble for HAVOC** is a new adventure book for Chaosium's Superworld. It is also compatible with **Champions** and **Villains & Vigilantes**.

The big interest, of course, is in the latest **Call of Cthulhu** releases. This is Chaosium's major title now and very successful. Chaosium have two new Cthulhu products, and as usual the first major task the doughty investigators face is how to pronounce the titles. First is **Trail of Tsathogghua** which contains three scenarios. The investigators shiver their way through Greenland before the final test of wits in the Haunted House. The other release is something of a monster itself. It's a complete boxed campaign consisting of five booklets, each covering a different adventure in a particular geographical location. There is also an introduction and a set of player handouts. The name of this impressive package is **Masks of Nyarlathotep** and the UK price is likely to be horrendous.

Collectors' Item

Tunnels & Trolls has finally come out of the closet. Its bright new colour box should by now be twinkling at you from the shop shelves. Contents are as before except that the enclosed rulebook is also sporting a colour cover. Price is now £8.95. Chris Harvey, T&T's UK publisher, tells me that he also has **Enemies 3** for **Champions** at the same current price as **Enemies 2**.

Champions itself has been reboxed. It hasn't arrived in Britain at the time of writing but a neutral observer (Steve Parker of Virgin Games) is quoted as pronouncing it to be 'very nice'. The game inside, so far as we know, is unchanged.

Chris also reports a totally unexpected and more or less unsolicited upsurge in sales of old **Metagaming** games which he has had in stock for years. Why this should be is unclear. Surely they're not collector's items already?

Cthulhu Crackers

Games Workshop, of course, print Cthulhu under licence in Britain. However, they are not content to leave it at that. The word went out from the Sunbeam Road nervecentre that individuals of exceptional talent, erudition and intellect were to be assembled for a special task. If possible those selected were to be proficient in joined-up writing also. Well, after a search worthy of being made into an rpg in its own right, a team was put together whose names were capable of making the average MENSA member throw in the towel and take up watching darts on the telly. Under one roof, GW brought Marcus Rowland and the semi-legendary Pete Tamlyn. The task given to these two was to design a Cthulhu adventure apiece. Work is now proceeding and already we see the benefit of using such powerful minds. Marcus' work has a title which is readily pronounceable — amazing! It's called **Shades of Terror** and is set in modern Britain. Peter's hasn't go the title stage yet but I doubt if we'll be disappointed when it finally surfaces. There is also going to be a third publication, jointly designed and described pithily as a 'Source Thing'. Should be a cracker.

Available now from GW is **Legacy of Evil**, an adventure for **Golden Heroes**. No sign of the **Judge Dredd** rpg yet. Latest news is that Marc Gascoigne is 'plodding on' with it.

Floppy Hats & Rapiers

Flashing Blades is a new rpg from FGU that attracted a lot of favourable comments at Toy Fair earlier this year. It takes one of the great romantic legends as its theme — that of the Three Musketeers. The basic set includes some intorductory scenarios and FGU have also produced **Parisian Adventures** which contains further situations to test the mettle of the floppy hat and rapier brigade. Some other new or upcoming adventure packs from FGU are **Lost World Tales** for **Daredevils** and **Devil's Domain, Tackle the Totem** and **The Pentacle Plot** for V&V. Planned but so far nameless are a couple of adventures for **Psi World** and one for **Other Suns**.

MAELSTROM

Hello, I thought, spotting this in a bookshop, yet another gamebook series! How wrong I was. This new addition to the Puffin Adventure Gamebooks series is a full-scale and surprisingly complete role-playing game, set in 16th century England. Not the most popular of settings, you might think, although historical rpgs have been around for a while and seem to have a quiet (apart from **En Garde!**) following of their own.

I looked inside the book, expecting to find a patch-up of **Fighting Fantasy** or a comparable simple rpg stretched to cover a late Medieval setting, but I was wrong again. **Maelstrom** is 298 pages of a very effective and clearly-written role-playing game system, with nine attributes, getting on for 30 professions plus notes on more, full rules for combat, experience and other game mechanics, and two adventures — one solo, one group — both of which can be played almost immediately.

Character generation is a choice-based system: each character has a basic 30 points in each attribute, plus another 50 for the player to distribute at will. The resulting scores are used for the attribute checks on which the game's mechanics depend, and may be increased with experience.

Professions can be chosen freely, and include Noble (not as advantageous as you might think at first glance!), Professional (including clerks, doctors and architects), Trader, Labourer, Mercenary, Rogue, Priest, Travelling Player, Mage and Herbalist. The balance between the various professions is very well-maintained, and some are surprisingly useful, although all have their strengths and weaknesses. The treatment of Rogues is an utter delight, with beggars (five different kinds!), thieves, burglars, assassins and tricksters all lovingly detailed. Anyone who enjoyed IMAGINE™ magazine #24 should buy Maelstrom for these alone.

The magic system is low-key, and simple but elegant and open-ended — instead of endless lists of spells, the referee takes each case on its merits, weighing up the difficulty of the desired effect and assigning modifiers to the Mage's Knowledge attribute check to know an appropriate conjuration and to one or more Will attribute checks to cast the spell correctly. Needless to say, practitioners of magic run certain risks in 16th century England, so magic must be used with great care. Priests also have the ability to work small miracles, as well as exorcising troublesome spirits, but possibly the most useful skill is their ability to sway men's hearts through preaching and oratory.

The game mechanics depend almost entirely on skill and attribute checks, making the game easy to learn and quick to play. A section of advanced rules covers encumbrance, professional attribute modifiers, dual professions, training and experience, blood loss and critical wounds, expanding the game neatly and effectively.

A solo adventure of 160 entries is included to help the reader get to grips with the basic rules. Designed for an assassin character, it features a contract on a merchant, and runs through a number of common situations, so fixing the basic mechanics in the mind fairly painlessly.

The group adventure is interesting and unusual — it takes the form of a journey by road from St Albans to London, with a number of planned events and encounters along the way as well as several complications on arrival. The journey can be used to introduce a party of diverse professions to each other, since provision is made for different characters to have different objectives and motives.

The historical background is one of this game's real strengths. The setting permeates the whole game, and is picked up just about painlessly as you go along — unlike some games where the rules are followed by a huge and heavy-going section on 'Campaign Background'. Mr Scott certainly seems to know his stuff as far as the background is concerned, and the game's atmosphere has a ring of credibility about it. A lot has been said over the years about the educational potential of role-playing games, but with the possible exception of **Bushido** (about the only game I can think of that bears comparison), Maelstrom must be the first product which can actually claim to do anything about it — and I must say I've never found learning 'history' such fun!

Finally, there is the price. At £1.95 the value for money leaves me lost for words, and if more commercial publishers move in on the role-playing market I can see games companies getting very, very worried.

Overall, Maelstrom is an interesting and elegantly-designed game. Players of fantasy rpgs will find a host of immensely useful information on 'real' late-Medieval life and society which could be a great help in developing campaign backgrounds, especially for city adventures. Everyone, whether they use the game itself or not, will find something in Maelstrom to justify paying £1.95 for it, and for the beginner wanting to find out what a full-scale role-playing game is all about, there can be no better introduction. And, perhaps best of all, the game is entirely British — and not before time, too!

Graeme Davis

Product Information

Maelstrom is a Puffin Book, available from most bookshops, price £1.95

Dragonlance Chronicles Vol 1 (£2.25), **DL3 - Dragons of Hope, DL4 - Dragons of Desolation** and **MV1 - Midnight on Dagger Alley** (£4.95 each) are all TSR products, distributed by TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD

Products reviewed on page 42

Warhammer II (£9.95) is a Games Workshop product: 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP

Middle Earth Role-Playing Game Combat Screen (£5.95) is an ICE product, distributed by Games Workshop. **Northern Mirkwood** (£7.50) and **Moria** (£9.95) from the same company, are distributed by Unwin Paperbacks, on sale in bookshops.

Omegakron (£9.95) is from Avalon Hill, 650 High Road, North Finchley London N12 0NL

Addresses are given for information only; most products should be available from hobby shops.

DRAGONLANCE®

Dragons of Autumn Twilight is the 'Book of the modules' of the first two DragonLance AD&D® game modules. As well as no less than twelve modules and books to match, the real DragonLance groupie can also get a DL calendar!

The book itself is a thick paperback of almost 450 pages. It is said to have been written partly from the play of the original modules. Does that make it a work of literature coincidentally related to an AD&D module series, or a roleplaying aid? Or both? Or neither?

As a roleplaying aid, this book would be valuable preliminary reading for a DM of the DragonLance series. It provides background

AD&D®:

The modules **DL3 - Dragons of Hope**, and **DL4 - Dragons of Desolation**, continue the **DragonLance** epic series and conclude the First Book of DragonLance, **Tales of Autumn Twilight** (not to be confused with the book of the series, **Dragonlance Chronicles** vol 1 — see review above).

Dragons of Hope starts off where **DL2 - Dragons of Flame** left off, and follows much the same format as the first module in the series, **DL1 - Dragons of Despair**. It is also presented in the same excellent layout and clarity of detail.

Provided with the module is a tabletop size map of the Lands of Abanasynia which can be used by the players to plot their progress. The adventurers are generally free to wander around these lands as they please (remember-

AD&D®: Midnight on Dagger Alley

MV1 - Midnight on Dagger Alley is the first of the Magic Viewer series of modules and is an Introductory Solo. The magic viewer is a transparent piece of red plastic which is used to filter out the red splurges covering the maps and encounter, wanderer and trap/treasure descriptions.

The action is set in the 'narrow muddy alleys' of the city of Goldstar and the four maps show the dungeon level, street level, upper level and rooftop level, each of which superimposes on top of the others, being linked by a numbered grid system. It must be said that the viewer works well, giving one the impression of having a very limited field of view as you would on a moonless night in a fog-shrouded city.

MV1, however, suffers all the usual problems of solos, ie lack of choice and channelling of actions. For instance, in describing the outside of a building the entry goes on to say that if you knock at the door, an elf answers and tells you to come back tomorrow!

Three 6th level characters, each with a mission, are provided; so I picked mine and, ever the romantic, set off to rescue the Princess. However, within 10 minutes I'd quite by accident completed another character's mission by finding what he was looking for! This highlights the main deficiency of the module, it is far too small. With a mere 5 sides of encounters, once you've completed the first mission, the second is already half done and as for the third...!

Generally, there are few mistakes but the two howling blunders are the directions to rooms upstairs in inns. I would suggest U48 and U17 should be squares R4 and H2 on the upper level respectively.

In conclusion, a novel idea but the size of the module makes it very poor value for money.

Chris Hunter

Chronicles: Dragons of Autumn Twilight

material, 'feel' for the campaign setting, and ideas for characterisation of NPCs etc. A DM has to be careful not to become a slave to the book's interpretation of the plot, however.

Players of the DragonLance modules must avoid reading this book until after playing the modules. Reading it before would both reveal the plot and tend to 'channel' characterization. Read after playing the modules, the book is interesting as a glimpse of what they might have done, or what was originally intended — although, due to minor plot differences, you can't assume that you can read the book because you've finished the first two modules!

As a novel, this book is something of a mixed bag. The story is straightforward, well told, occasionally funny and refreshingly free of the excesses of 'pseudo medieval' English. If it lacks anything it is in the areas of deep characterisation and profound feeling. The effect is rather that of a good quality book aimed at intelligent older children (or is that a definition of rpg players?). Although it provides a few hours' enjoyable reading, there are several other books in the genre which represent better buys.

In conclusion, the book stands up well as AD&D supplementary material, but rather less well as a novel.

Steve Hampshire

Dragons of Hope, Dragons of Desolation

ing that draconian armies are close behind), collecting hints as to where they should be heading, as they go. The storyline does not require them to be pushed along the right path as was required by DL2.

There are numerous encounters along the way to keep people on their toes, some played for the usual 'get in and slay them' effect and others to add humour to the situation. These all tend to work very well.

The only major flaw with the module is that by the end the players (and the DM) are supposed to have sufficient information to enable them to start DL4. Unfortunately this is not provided by the module and it is up to the DM to invent it. There are also several minor numbering errors on the plans, but these are easily spotted and corrected.

Dragons of Desolation leads the adventurers into the Dwarven Kingdom of Thorbardin. It departs from the previous DL format in that most of the action takes place in the urban surroundings of the Kingdom's cities.

The cities are described using a number of building blocks that are given on a large chart. This becomes a problem for the DM, trying to view it without letting the players see. This would have been far better printed along with the rest of the module text, or even as a separate booklet.

The descriptive text itself is vague, giving the DM plenty of work filling in the details. Part of the module (not at the end for a change) consists of traditional dungeon work. Even here there is very little description to aid the DM, who is not helped by an unclear diagram of the dungeon with several numbering errors on it (I had to resort to the picture on the front cover to help decipher it).

As with DL2, the players have to be carefully pushed along by the DM to ensure that they keep to the plot. Very few real decisions are left to them. Even the final big battle is carefully scripted.

Played as individual modules, neither DL3 nor DL4 will work very well, with no satisfactory conclusion to DL3 and insufficient background information for the start of DL4. As a pair they will work quite well given that the DM must be prepared to do plenty of work. As part of the Dragonlance series... it's like a television soap opera, once you've started you just can't stop. Roll on DL5.

Alan Mynard

WARHAMMER II

There has been a link between rolegames and wargames for as long as the former have been around, so it was not great surprise when Citadel brought out **Warhammer** (reviewed #8), a game which tried to fulfil both functions. As so often happens, however, in trying to do two jobs at once it was unable to do either really well. Hence, the second edition of the game concentrates on the wargaming rules, leaving the roleplaying aspects in the most part to the 'companion set' Warhammer Fantasy RolePlay.

The game consists of three booklets, Combat, Battle Magic and Battle Bestiary, which are A4 (rather than the original A5) and have covers printed in luscious colour. The quality of the artwork in the three booklets is variable but generally very good, and the layout is clear, if uninspired.

In the main, this edition corrects the more obvious flaws in the original — for example, a quick reference sheet with the more important tables is included — and the actual rules have been revised, knocked into shape, and treated to a good healthy dose of 'Forces of Fantasy'.

The Combat booklet gives the core Warhammer wargames rules, at three levels. First there are the Basic rules, which retain the simple 'roll a d6 to hit and check the table' approach of the original, and detail Movement, Shooting, Combat, Morale — all the essentials of a good wargame. The Advanced rules introduce several additional complexities such as Points values for armies, while the Expert rules appear to consist of three pages on the subjects of Fighting a Campaign and Characters as Casualties.

Book Two covers Battle Magic, a simple Spell Points system based on Constitution Points. There are five different types of Magic — Battle Magic proper, Necromantic, Illusionist, Demonic and Elemental Magic. Each of these types has a type of Wizard devoted to it, although Wizards specialising in the latter four kinds can also use some Battle Magic spells. This booklet also includes 'The Magnificent Sven', a small-scale scenario introducing players to the rules (and lots of puns).

Book Three is basically a compendium of monsters in the style that we've come to know and love (or loathe...) in other games, and it includes details on a campaign/world setting — 'The Known Worlds' with nation descriptions and Time Line.

All in all, Warhammer is a much improved package, which covers the field of Fantasy Figures Wargaming with simple rules, and yet more comprehensively than virtually any other product.

Paul Mason

MERP: Combat Screen, Northern Mirkwood & Moria

The **Middle Earth Role-playing Combat Screen** is perfectly adequate for use as intended, and MERP is definitely a game which requires a comprehensive quick reference guide, as the rules are complex. However, one could easily photocopy the tables straight from the rulebook — no new material is presented — for far less than the selling price of the Screen; and ICE could have granted permission for players to do so. As it is, they are selling people something they already have at a price they can hardly afford.

Your money would be far better spent on **Northern Mirkwood**. This is one of ICE's campaign modules, each of which details a large area of Middle Earth, describing the background but leaving plenty of freedom for the referee.

Northern Mirkwood comes with a very interesting full-colour pull-out map, and the high standard of presentation expected of ICE are maintained throughout this and the other products reviewed here.

The 52 pages of text are well used, with as much detail as anyone could ever wish for. I particularly liked the data on trade and barter, and I'm sure the character backgrounds for players with built-in motives for adventure are a good way of getting players integrated into the campaign. But there is so much detail, and so many (often obscure) facts, that it would be a task of near-heroic dimensions to become thoroughly conversant with it all — and, indeed, I wouldn't recommend ICE products to anyone short of time or dedication.

Moria is not as good, as the setting for adventure is, believe it or not, quite unsuitable for varied play. You have two options: to play before Durin's folk left, which involves necessary intrigue and diplomacy, or to play after Durin's folk have gone, which is a simple — and boring — dungeon-bashing campaign. With 14 levels it is a massive dungeon, and not very unusual.

Although there is a lot of interesting detail, I fear that disappointment is in store for those who buy this module because Moria is *the* classic dungeon adventure. I'm sorry, but it isn't.

Andy Blakeman

OMEGAKRON

Omegakron is the third in a series of boxed scenarios for Avalon Hill's **Lords of Creation** game. However, contrary to the advice of **Yeti Sanction** (reviewed in #24) we learn in Omegakron that there are to be only five scenarios in the series — ie the players will not in fact be led all the way to being Lords of Creation.

Continuing a strange marketing policy which looks like an attempt to force self-respecting LoC GMs into purchasing these scenarios, Ok contains not only a 32-page scenario booklet and player aids (maps and an 8-page booklet entitled 'A Short History of Arrow') but also a totally indispensible pad of LoC character sheets (just how did we manage without them?).

Don't be put off by this, as the high standards of presentation and content set by the two previous scenarios are thankfully carried over into Ok, and once again GMs should have no difficulty in finding their way through the scenario. Ok is different in its approach from the previous two, however, in that the adventure is not linear and indeed the players can take many different courses in their attempt to reach their ultimate goal. This is, basically, to enable the Time Adjusters to travel to Omegakron so that they can find out what has caused a shift from the main time flow in turn leading to a nuclear war. There is a nice touch at the end of the scenario which ties in with **Horn of Roland** (review #22) and the opportunity is there for a follow-on to the next scenario in the series, the **Towers of Ilium**, if the GM wishes this.

In conclusion — as with the previous two, nice scenario, shame about the price!

Mike Dean

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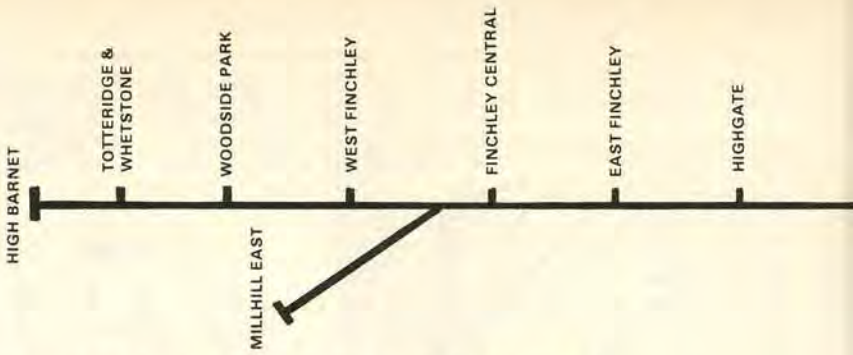
CHAIN MAIL

by Brian Creese



This Month's Play-By-Mail Game: **FINCHLEY CENTRAL**

In the world of games, really new ideas occur only very infrequently. The abstract brilliance of chess has ensured an undying popularity for two thousand years. In more recent times, the phenomenal growth of fantasy role-playing games, a virtually unheard of style of gaming ten years ago, has introduced new concepts to replace 'winning' and 'losing' while simultaneously liberating the imagination in an entirely unique manner. **Diplomacy**, too, with its concept of interpersonal communications being of far more importance than any complex rules, deserves a minor accolade. However, all the conceptual leaps outlined above pale into insignificance beside the game of **Finchley Central**.

Who invented this astonishing game, and when, remains a mystery, though a BBC documentary over Christmas put forward persuasive evidence that the game has been regularly played, in the upper echelons of society at least, for over 500 years. It is a game which can be played by any number of people, in any location, by post, in the pub or in the drawing room. Its originality lies not in its game mechanics, its victory criteria or even its extreme portability, but in the singular concept that winning is nothing — indeed winning a game of Finchley Central is childishly easy — the idea is to play with style.

For the stylish gamesplayer, Finchley Central is the ultimate game.

Today Finchley Central is played on a map of the London Underground. Inevitably a host of variants exists, from the Paris Metro to the network of sewers around Newcastle, but serious players do stick to the generally accepted London Transport format.

The rules are simplicity itself, and are as follows:

1. Each player, in turn, names a London Underground station.

2. The winner is the first to say 'Finchley Central'.

How I wish all games had such easily understandable rules, but then, Finchley Central belongs to the people, and has yet to be packaged by a major games company, with plastic markers and a jigsaw-style interlocking cardboard underground map, and with an exorbitant price to match. Finchley Central, with its elegant simplicity, is firmly centred on the streets of cultural credibility.

As I have explained, when playing Finchley Central, style is all. Let us take, as an example, my experience teaching the game to a relative novice of gamesplaying in the pub one evening. He appeared puzzled by the rules, but I immediately started a game, inviting him to name a station, any station, first. 'Finchley Central' he said, and won the game. I challenged him to a second and he again opened 'Finchley Central', moving 2-0 ahead on the series. A third time and his tactics were unaltered, 'Finchley Central' and an impressive lead. But he looked troubled, confused as he realised that he was missing something. Another game, I demanded, and this time he pondered for a long time. 'Turnham Green' he said in a softer voice, then added, 'There's more to this than I first thought.' How true, how true!

In the postal games world, Finchley Central is highly organised. Gazfinc (The Gazetteer of the International Finchley Central Association) is the official Finchley Central hobby zine, and through its pages are run the various services which we would expect, the Finchley Central Gamestart Service, the Finchley Central Official Numbering Service, and most importantly, the Finchley Central

GAME COMPANY

Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events...

Events

With the highlight of the Events calendar over for another year, let's have a brief look at what else is planned for gamers in 1985...

Manorcon: The latest news is that there almost certainly *won't* be a Manorcon this year, though it's hoped that someone will organise a summer con in its place.

Sol III: Last call for this charity Trekkie con, at the Adelphi, Liverpool, 3-6 May.

Dragonmeet: Set aside 25 May for this 'dry' gamers' event in Central Hall, Westminster.

Albacon 85: 19-22 July, in Central Hotel, Glasgow. GoH Anne McCaffrey, Harlan Ellison. That's all we know, but write to 20 Hillingdon Gdns, Cardonald, Glasgow for more details.

Camcon: We're waiting for our invite to this Unicon, at New Hall College Cambridge, 13-15 September. Details: Neil Taylor, Perspective Design Ltd, 9 Pembroke St, Cambridge.

Games Day: Royal Horticultural Hall, London will be the venue for Games Workshop's annual jamboree, 28-29 September.

Novacon 15: 1-3 November, De Vere Hotel Coventry. GoH Dave Langford (see fiction #3, 12). Details 86 Bearwood Farm Rd, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72

Clubs

We will print details of clubs, or club-less individuals, free of charge: write to IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge

DURHAM: Two mentions for Durham this month. Durham Treasure Trap Society have appealed for a new venue for their real life role-playing adventures, as the lease at Peckforton Castle has run out. Any ideas? Please contact Joanne Shorthouse, Trevelyan College, Elvet Hill Rd, Durham.

On a different note, Simon Donald (age 15) has been role-playing for quite a while and is looking for a suitable club in his area. Write to 48 Lumley Rd, Newton Hall Estate, Durham.

STEVENAGE: A keen **AD&D** player, Michael Doney (age 11) would like to know if there are any clubs in his area. Write to Beacon House, 15 Deards End Lane, Knebworth, Herts.

GRIMSBY: At The Guild, they play **AD&D, Runequest, Stormbringer, Victorian Adventure, Call of Cthulhu, Warhammer, Bushido, Star Trek**, and nearly all other rpgs, 6.30 - 11.30pm on Thursdays. Membership is £2 per year and 50p per week, which gets you access to club discounts and club trips as well. Bk 38, Ladysmith Rd (in Sixhills St), Grimsby, S Humberside.

LEICESTER/LOUGHBOROUGH: The Mad Butchers of the Flatulent Wyvern Society is the unlikely name of an **AD&D** club which meets every Sunday in this area. Dave Webster, 455 Loughborough Rd, Birstall, Leics.

NORTHAMPTON: Northants RPGers' Assoc meets once a week to play various **AD&D** campaigns. Realism stressed; miniatures used. 17+ age restriction. Contact Chris Lampert, 28 Larch Lane, New Duston, Northampton.

Ratings Service. Its pages are frequently filled with debate on the most elegant opening play, or the most accurate ratings system.

This is not the place to outline some of the simpler theories for either opening or middle play, but I think it is obvious that successful openings will avoid most of what we in London have had to learn to call Zone 1, the area roughly bounded by the Circle Line. Today's stylists tend to open somewhere in the further reaches of the Metropolitan or Bakerloo, although the Osterly Gambit, Osterly followed by Chalfont & Latimer, Arnos Grove and Farringdon, is experiencing something of a renaissance.

I think I have explained Finchley Central sufficiently for you now to realise that it can hardly be described as a game at all; indeed, it is more an art form of the highest level, encompassing the great philosophies and aesthetics of our time, an activity which operates directly against the more gross aspects of today's materialist and achievement ethics. Truly a synthesis of opposites operating within the confines of an abstract game.

Finchley Central, the game where style means more than winning.

Brian Creese

Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs & Events.... Clubs

NUNEATON: rpg club requires members age 18+. Meet Wednesday nights 7.30-11.00. Phone Marnie, tel 382325, for details.

Hobbymeets

Hobbymeets, long neglected in this column, are non-gaming events where gamers meet socially, usually in a pub. We haven't much information so we'd like to hear if there is one in your area.

We understand that there is now no **Glasgow** hobbymeet. Wallace & co are obviously too busy with *Prisoners of War*. **Lambmeet** in **London** is also nō more — it has been transformed into 'Verticalmeet'. Consult *NMR!* for details. The **Coventry** meet is said to be moving — Nick Kinzett is the man to contact, at 11 Daleway Rd. A new **Sheffield** meet is proposed by Neil Hopkins of *Ground Zero*: see *Press Cuttings*, #23 for his address. See *NMR!* to discover whether Steve Norledge succeeded in launching a **Southampton** meet. Finally, the next **Cambridge** meet will be at the newly renovated Salisbury Arms on May 3rd, from 7.30 onwards.

DISPEL CONFUSION

*Role-playing games have rules which are open to interpretation, and this sometimes causes problems when two gamers interpret things differently. **Dispel Confusion** is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games; while the answers we give are not fully official we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience (among our other dubious abilities).

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9"x 4" SSAE.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Is it possible to cast the spell **pyrotechnics** on magical fires, for example a **fireball**, and will it increase the area of effect of the fireball by 10 as pyrotechnics does with a normal fire? *(Advanced)*

A. A pyrotechnics spell does not increase the volume of a flame by a factor of 10. What it actually does is to replace the flame by a cloud of blinding fireworks (10 times the volume of the flame) or smoke (100 times the volume of the flame), extinguishing the flame in the process.

It seems reasonable to say that casting the spell on a fireball would be possible, since a fireball spell actually produces flame (as it should do, given its name). Since the flames are extinguished, the fireball would no longer do any damage, but the effects could still be quite interesting — and potentially very powerful.

A pyrotechnics spell cast upon a fireball could produce a sphere of blinding fireworks with a radius of about 43 feet, and it would also blind all creatures up to 120 feet beyond that, plus those in a direct line of sight! Alternatively, the combination could produce a globe of smoke about 93 feet in radius, within which vision is reduced to 2 feet or less. These, even by mega-character standards, are pretty powerful — and would be excellent methods for stopping large concentrated groups of creatures, if only by laying down a smokescreen on top of an advancing army, or blinding a regiment or two....

Difficulties arise in respect of timing, aiming and ranging. For the combination of spells to work, the two casters (there would have to be two casters) would not only have to cast their two spells at exactly the same time, but they would also have to cast them into the same place. Not easy in the heat of a battle!

Finally, although a fireball has a range of 10" + 1"/level, the pyrotechnics spell has only a 16" or 12" range, depending upon whether a druid or a magic user casts it, which might limit the range of the combined effect somewhat.

Q. If a character with a strength of 10 finds a **girdle of giant strength**, can he or she become a ranger, which has a minimum strength requirement of 13? *(Advanced)*

A. No. Character class prerequisites apply to the unaugmented permanent abilites of a character. Abilities that are boosted above the required minimum only while items such as gauntlets, rings and girdles are in the character's possession do not count; the augmentation is temporary, lasting only as long as the item is worn. Of course, for characters who read manuals and tomes — or use **wishes** — to increase their abilities *permanently*, these restrictions do not apply when they enter a new class (see PHB p33, 'The Character with Two Classes'), as their natural abilities have been improved for good, without the temporary aid of artificial devices which withdraw their benefits when no longer worn etc.

A similar point should also be made about the D&D game — it is the character's unaugmented abilities that count when determining if a class is a good choice for that character, so players cannot claim that their brand new character just happened to inherit daddy's girdle of giant strength.

Q. If a troll's finger is chopped off, would the troll grow a new finger or the finger grow a new troll? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. The troll grows a new finger, unless the finger is the last piece of the troll left unburnt. Incidentally, how does it know when it is the last piece?

If the regeneration worked the other way round the world would be knee deep in trolls. Trolls themselves would see the advantages of hacking off a finger or two in the middle of a fight to provide instant allies or the bits that adventurers missed when splashing the oil or acid around would spawn their own complete trolls...

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher & Graeme Morris

CRASIMOFF'S WORLD

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'Undoubtedly, CRASIMOFF'S WORLD is a highly worthy game. It has been running for several years now and has a large number of players. Compared to others of its kind it is not expensive and it goes out of its way to encourage communication between players. I found the initial scenario interesting, and the world lived up to this promise. The fact that they are hand-written merely testifies to the immense amount of effort put in by the GM. So, with its regular newsletter, Crasimoff's World is a friendly, efficient and relatively cheap game to play, and if you wish to try a commercial PBM game with a distinctly D&D game-ish flavour, I would unhesitatingly recommend it.'

As reviewed in **IMAGINE** 18

Earth Wood

THE MAJOR US PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME

EARTHWOOD has been running for over 3 years in America and currently has over 2,000 players. KJC games has been granted the exclusive right to moderate this unique computer-moderated Play-By-Mail game in the UK. Twenty-five players compete all the cities of Earthwood and be the ultimate player. A typical game will last about 18 months with the first knockouts after six months.

Each player is either a king or a fantasy race or a powerful charismatic character in this world of conquest and sorcery. Your character or king controls several groups, each of which is totally independent of the others. You can recruit NPC trolls, wildmen and others into your service, or even control such powerful creatures as dragons or giant spiders. Your characters may also control or capture cities, upon which you can spend gold to improve security, increase your workshop's production, build defences and maintain or enlarge you army. With gold your wizards can undertake magical research to increase their power and knowledge and thus aid your armies in battle. Spies can search out enemy strongholds, attempt to do acts of sabotage, theft and assassination. These are just a few of the options available to a player in EARTHWOOD.

EARTHWOOD is completely computer-moderated, but the turn sheet and replies are written in plain English so that you can easily understand them. No need to look through complex charts and code books to understand this game.

If you wish to enrol in CRASIMOFF'S WORLD or EARTHWOOD, send a £5.00 cheque/PO payable to KJC Games. For this you will receive a rulebook, set-up material, the latest newsletter and the first four rounds. Future rounds are £1.25 each. European rates are as UK.

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*Colin Greenland, author of **Daybreak on a Different Mountain** and co-editor of SF magazine **Interzone**, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Sam (Jonathan Pryce) dreams he is flying high over Monolith City in **Brazil** from Twentieth Century Fox

Even the dungeons of Aquila could not hold Phillipe the Mouse — but the astute young pick-pocket would soon have fallen to the vengeance of the villainous Bishop, had it not been for the mysterious warrior in black and his remarkable hawk. Who is Etienne of Navarre, where does he vanish to after dark, and who is the strange woman, friend to wolves, who takes his place? **LADYHAWKE** (Fox, PG) is a singular tale of witchcraft, love and courage, with a fascinating idea that it almost makes the most of. Pan publish the book, by Joan D Vinge, at £1.95.

From the legendary past to a bizarre but all too recognizable world 'the other side of now'. In his dreams, Sam Lowry is a winged avenger, battling an electronic samurai to rescue a fantasy woman, but by day he's just another humble clerk in the totalitarian machine that is Central Services. Trying to untangle a bureaucratic foul-up that has cost an innocent man's life, Lowry stumbles into an underworld of freedom and danger, and finds that his dream damsel is real. She drives a truck, and she's not in distress at all. But by now Lowry is. Terry Gilliam's **BRAZIL** (Fox, 15) is a daring, exorbitant vision, sombrely funny and darkly true.

BABY: SECRET OF THE LOST LEGEND (Touchstone, U) proves that the Walt Disney formula can even make a brontosaurus cute, while **THE NEVERENDING STORY** (Warner, U) features a dragon that looks like a cross between a giant newt and a spaniel. Perhaps the heroic quest of young Atreyu to save the land of Fantasia from the all-consuming Nothing might have been more convincing if it hadn't been so clumsily edited. As it is, the best of the film is its wealth of fantastic design, collected in Michael Goerden's big colour book **THE WORLD OF THE NEVERENDING STORY** (Paper Tiger, £6.95).

The latest in the Enchanted World series, **FAIRIES AND ELVES** (Time-Life Books, £12.50 from 153 New Bond St, London W1E 8WE) is also a big colour book, of fairy stories and paintings, medieval, Elizabethan and Victorian, all jumbled together with little sense of history or meaning. Those who prefer their fairy-tales sophisticated, in weighty prose with scholarly footnotes and appendices, will plunge joyously into J R R Tolkien's first **BOOK OF LOST TALES** (Unwin, £2.95). Also from Unwin at £2.95, **KRISHNA**, Nigel Frith's second 'new epic', after his very successful **Asgard**. This one is researched and written for us 'finally to be overpowered by the sheer lusciousness and impetus of Krishna'. Start practising those finger-cymbals now.

Two quests are done, two popular fantasy series complete, with **ENCHANTERS' END GAME** (Corgi, £1.95) by David Eddings ('Thus ends the epic story of the **Belgariad**) and **THE SEVENTH GATE** (Unwin, £2.95) by Geraldine Harris ('concludes the story of the **Seven Citadels**'). Elsewhere, the **Atlan Saga** is only just beginning: look out for **THE SERPENT** (Futura, £2.50) by Jane Gaskell. Princess Cija, born to be a goddess, is swept off overnight as a hostage in the army of the brutal, fascinating General Zerd. To thwart an ancient prophecy, she must assassinate him; but first she must survive being pitched into the muddy middle of a war that will engulf a continent, after spending her first 17 years locked in a tower. Meanwhile, Atlantis waits silently in the east... Written as the journal of the bewildered, wilful young woman, **The Serpent** has been out of print for nearly 20 years, and is rich with sensation and vitality that make much more recent fantasy writing look quite pale. Even the cover is exquisite!

Other notable re-issues: John Brunner's **THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK** (Methuen, £1.95), the chronicle of the softly-spoken little pilgrim with the staff of curdled light, whose task it is to end the rule of Chaos and usher in the age of Order. Wry, thoughtful fantasy in the vein of Lord Dunsany and Jack Vance. If you'd rather have freshly glistening and reflectively iridescent black slime, blasphemous vegetables, monstrosities, star spawn — help yourself to the **H P LOVECRAFT OMNIBUS** (Granada, 3 vols, £2.50 each). Also from Granada, Bob Shaw's sf classic **ORBITSVILLE** (£1.95), about the discovery of a world built inside a bubble blown around a sun. For gamebook fans, **THE CHASM OF DOOM** (Sparrow, £1.50) is the latest Lone Wolf adventure from Joe Dever and Gary Chalk. You can start here, but you'd be much better off going back to the first two and equipping yourself with the almighty Sommerswerd, a heavy duty blade if ever there was one.

Colin Greenland

Letters

*Welcome, once again, to that part of the magazine which has been variously described as 'the best part of the magazine after the Contents' (Mrs Cockburn) and 'the bit where you rabbit on and on about letters we all know you wrote anyway' (Eric the Cleric). Since we have an over-sized **VOP** on our hands, I'd better get on with faking this month's letters right away, with just the customary pause to make it look real. If you have a point of view that you think other gamers might like to hear, don't delay; write to **IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD** today!*

The biggest controversy for a while was stirred up by the cover of #24. We haven't had so many letters about a cover since that little misunderstanding with #10.

Mark Nelson, Spondon, Derby: Hey! You can't go around making good covers — people might start buying the magazine. When **IMAGINE** was first advertised we were promised 'brilliant covers'. What did we get? — pathetic, crummy stuff; but now, a masterpiece which is very Gorean in outlook and pose.

N B Wright, Fairfield, Liverpool: Your last issue (#24), although being very good in content, fell into the gutter of your rivals. So far the non-sexist attitude of your magazine has been refreshing, but I was most disappointed with this.

Christian Lam, Salford: Congratulations on your best cover yet! Ken Kelly can draw his pay now.

Malcolm Parkin, Shipley, W Yorks: #24 has a magnificent cover (well done, Ken), but it reminded me of something I nearly said about a previous issue. Why does the lady on #18 look so much like Sandra Dickenson, and the woman on the horse look like Koo Stark?

*And so on. At a panel discussion at Warwick University recently, at which Ian Marsh of **White Dwarf** and I faced an audience of gamers to answer questions on a variety of topics, this cover raised a lot more steam. It's easy to see why, and also why it should appeal to a different section of our audience. Frankly, we didn't set out to be controversial, but the field of fantasy art owes very little to the concepts of the **D&D** games, and therefore suitable pictures are not always available. If you want a fighter thumping the living daylights out another guy, no problem. Women in various states of undress are a pretty common theme too. But thieves? It would be ironic if a cover which we felt forced to use for want of choice proved on the one hand a firm favourite with some of our audience and offended another section. It's a known fact that covers sell magazines – so why not tell us which ones have worked, and which ones have failed? I'm sure we haven't hear the last of the lady on the horse.*

*A while ago I asked if there were any supporters for Matt Connell's suggestion that the **Dragonlance** modules were a sign of a downturn in scenario quality. We've had a lot more letters, mostly like this:*

David Pearson, Stoke Golding, Warwicks: I was disappointed to see yet another so-called serious gamer ranting and raving on (**Letters #23**). Perhaps Matt would like to explain the true spirit of the game? Even though I thought the UK modules were enjoyable, I found the basic plots unoriginal. The **Dragonlance** scenarios, on the other hand, are like a breath of fresh air. The world of Krynn is totally different.

The modules give players the chance to participate in an epic quest. How many other adventures give the party the chance to save a world?

D M Parker, Berkhamsted, Herts: A certain Matt Connell criticised the maps, characters and just about anything else he could think of from **DL 1&2**. Most of his criticisms are totally unjustified. The maps are of a superior quality to any previous releases. Admittedly the prose tends to be a little verbose, but this is entirely preferable to the lack of descripion to which certain modules are susceptible. I can only say that I thoroughly enjoyed both modules and look forward to the future modules in the series.

*This is getting a bit one-sided, so I'm declaring the official end to the MC hunting season. Onto #24 and the Thieves Special. Behind **that** cover were a number of articles that we thought really added something to the class. So, what did you think?*

Pete Blanchard, Woking, Surrey: I thought the majority of the stuff on Thieves was nice....

Nice? Are you sure you're not getting too excited about it, Pete?

....if not directly useful. The best thing was Chris Felton's **All That Glistens**. I find discursive articles far more useful than rules expansions, because I use more than one game system, as, I'm sure, do a great many other players.

CR, Cardiff: #24 was excellent. Please publish more small thieves adventures. The class does seem to get left out.

Paul S Williams, Torquay, Devon: I was particularly interested in **Criminal Negligence** by Kerry Bateman, as I have always considered character classes the very centre of the game. I agree with Kerry about the plight of Thieves. I would, however, take issue with him on his suggested methods for combating the problem. His answer was to restrict the other character classes and to have the DM organise something in the campaign for the Thieves to do.

Personally, I think this is a little unfair. My answer would be to give the Thief more abilities. For example, integrate the Thief Acrobat skills (#6), which are no great shakes, give them the ability to slip out of bonds like Houdini (something like the percentage chance of Picking Pockets), and give them extra knowledge about the area; people, places and things (perhaps the same as the Bard's Legend Lore).

Jeremy Nuttall, Congleton, Cheshire: Criminal Negligence was quite a good article. The problem with the Thief class is that it is exactly that — a Thief! Thieves are best played alone, or on jobs with other Thieves, rather than dungeoneering. I would suggest a new class, the Scout, with a tracking skill instead of Pick Pockets.

Thieves Den was excellent, and very useful in setting up a Thieves' community. Perhaps it tailed off a bit in the middle with the nauseous new spells, but apart from that it was good, solid stuff.

All That Glistens was another beauty. Conning, like Thieves' Guilds, has been something I've overlooked so far in my campaign. I wasn't very sure about the bit regarding conning players. Chris obviously has very suspicious players, and is making too much of it being DM vs players. The story neatly tied off the article, showing a full con at work — very impressive it was too.

Guilty If Caught was useful, and probably the most useful sort of scenario — one which can easily be slid into a campaign. The trouble with this, though, is that once you begin to get Thieves on jobs, things begin to pall after a while, so a few more exciting missions could do with being slid in. The amounts of gps seemed a bit extravagant, though.

Mark Nelson: Recently, there has been a general development of the restrictions imposed on certain classes regarding weapons, such as the use of bows by thieves. This has not been carried far enough. You suggest that the old restriction should continue except for certain clerics who must use different weapons; why not say that **all** clerics can use any weapons, **except** where there is a specific restriction. Surely this is a more 'realistic' position. Applying the same principle to thieves, we could have something which goes along the lines of "a 1st-level Thief must have the old choice *(as in the rules)*, but on each proficiency gain he or she may select any weapon which costs Xgp to learn."

The look at Thieves missed out a point which is very important. Why do Thieves receive the Read Languages skill? Surely this skill is based on Intelligence and not Dexterity so that it should be an MU/Sage skill?

Or, if you've decided to follow Paul Vernon's advice in #23, it ought to be a skill learned beyond the restrictions of character classes. We're delighted that the articles in the Thief Special have provoked such interest and discussion. Magic-Users and Illusionists are the next classes to come under the microscope, so if you've got any ideas, you'd better start putting pen to paper.

*In the next month or two you will see some changes in our Hobby coverage in line with what we learned through the **Readers' Poll**. There is a lot more interest in fanzines and hobby-related activities than perhaps everyone realises, and the recent spate of new fanzines – as reviewed in **Press Cuttings** – shows how a new generation of fanzine editors is coming forward. The next two letters show why we feel the amateur side of the hobby is important, and might persuade a few more of you to get involved in the hobby – even if only by reading the coverage in this magazine!*

Zy Nicholson, Slough, Berks: While scanning **Press Cuttings**, my eyes happened to catch the words '**Dagon**, good if you play **Call of Cthulhu**.'

Being short of **CoC** material, I sent off for a copy. I was very pleased with the contents, and the editor was most helpful and answered all my queries on the game. I have now subscribed.

However, it seems that Dagon is suffering from a lack of money and support. I am writing to let everyone know that Dagon is worth buying. Keep up the excellent work.

Graham Staplehurst, London: Please find enclosed a copy of **Deneb Sector** for review in **IMAGINE** magazine. This **Traveller** scenario was written between 1983-84, primarily for **Quasits and Quasars**. After that 'zine folded, I determined to continue with an attempt to publish it and came up with the idea of doing it myself. Dave Hulks helped with the graphics and illustrations, whilst Trevor Mendham did all the typing and word-processing.

After many delays and changes, the supplement was finally sent to the printers in December 1984. We decided to donate all profits made to

the **Save The Children Fund**, who gave their support to the project, and Marc Miller gave his permission to use the word 'Traveller' on the cover.

The finished booklet is 60 pages and contains complete listings for 16 subsectors and many planets with adventure ideas. 11 of these are strung together to form a single adventure. We think that it is possibly the biggest Traveller supplement yet from this point of view. It will be available in certain games shops (Games Workshop, Virgin Games and smaller independent shops) at various prices (RRP £2.95), or by mail order (price: £2.25 + 50p p&p from:

DENEB, 62 Church Road, Harlesden, London NW10 9QD.

*I think these letters illustrate two points. First, **Dagon**, and 'zines like it, are the only way minority games can be assured of regular coverage. Much though we might like to publish more material on **CoC**, **Runequest**, **James Bond 007** or whatever, we have to recognise that it is the two breeds of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game that butter our bread. 'Zines can be a vital centre of communication for players of a game who find themselves separated by a lot of country from others of their kind.*

*Second, there are some good people involved in the hobby, capable of having some great ideas. **Deneb Sector** is one such idea. We will indeed be reviewing it very soon, but if you're a **Traveller** player, you can show that it isn't just rock musicians who can do something for the people of the Third World. Buy a copy, now!*

*While we're looking at fan coverage, let's take a glimpse at some of the early reactions to **Soapbox**, where we give the amateur side of the hobby space to put over their ideas.*

R D Wilkinson, Peterborough, Cambs: I agree with Paul Mason's views on why people play role-playing games (**Soapbox** #24). I play for a multitude of reasons; fun, a chance to let the imagination fly, and a bit of escapism amongst others. These reasons account for why I don't play the **AD&D** game.

The games that seem to promote role-playing are **T&T**, **RQ** and a sophisticated form of the **D&D** game. This is because you don't get bogged down in the rules, and if you get a situation not covered by them, you just expand your own ideas and write some rules to cover it. In the AD&D game, a lot of potentially uncovered areas are covered, and if DMs don't agree with them, they are often against changing them thanks to the domination of the game by EGG. There are so many rules in the AD&D game that you spend 10% of the time role-playing and 90% of the time 'rule-playing'.

I don't often disagree in print with correspondents, but I think you're way off-line, RDW. Two points. The AD&D books are reference tools, explaining concepts in a particular language that gamers can immediately translate into their own. Where is the difference between buying rules or making up your own as far as role-playing goes? It's how you use them that counts. Second, the idea that Gary – or anyone else – dominates individual AD&D games is crazy. He has offered one set of interpretations which you can take or leave. Just how many players do you think there are who slow down a game to nit-pick over rules 90% of the time? There are some, yes, but how many more have developed a short-hand form of play that incorporates their own ideas, classes, interpretations of rules, etc? Some people just like to have some basis to start with, that's all, and there are plenty of AD&D players who would consider themselves as well equipped for role-playing as anyone else. Aren't there? Don't leave me on my own here – speak up!

There are signs that some of the ideas that were rooting around a while ago for changes to and expansion of the AD&D game might be coming closer to reality. Here's one reader who's breath appears to be less than bated about some of those ideas.

Letters

P Kornejeus, Halifax, W Yorks: While mulling over my back issues, I came across a **Dispel Confusion** in #15 — what is the Jester class? The answer mentioned a few other classes which might be on the way, so I dug out my dictionary and came out with these definitions.

The Savant turns out to be a medieval research chemist; the Montebank was a travelling salesman who purveyed medicines and pots and pans of doubtful quality; the Mystic was a keeper of old laws and languages, who also acted as a communicator between man and the gods.

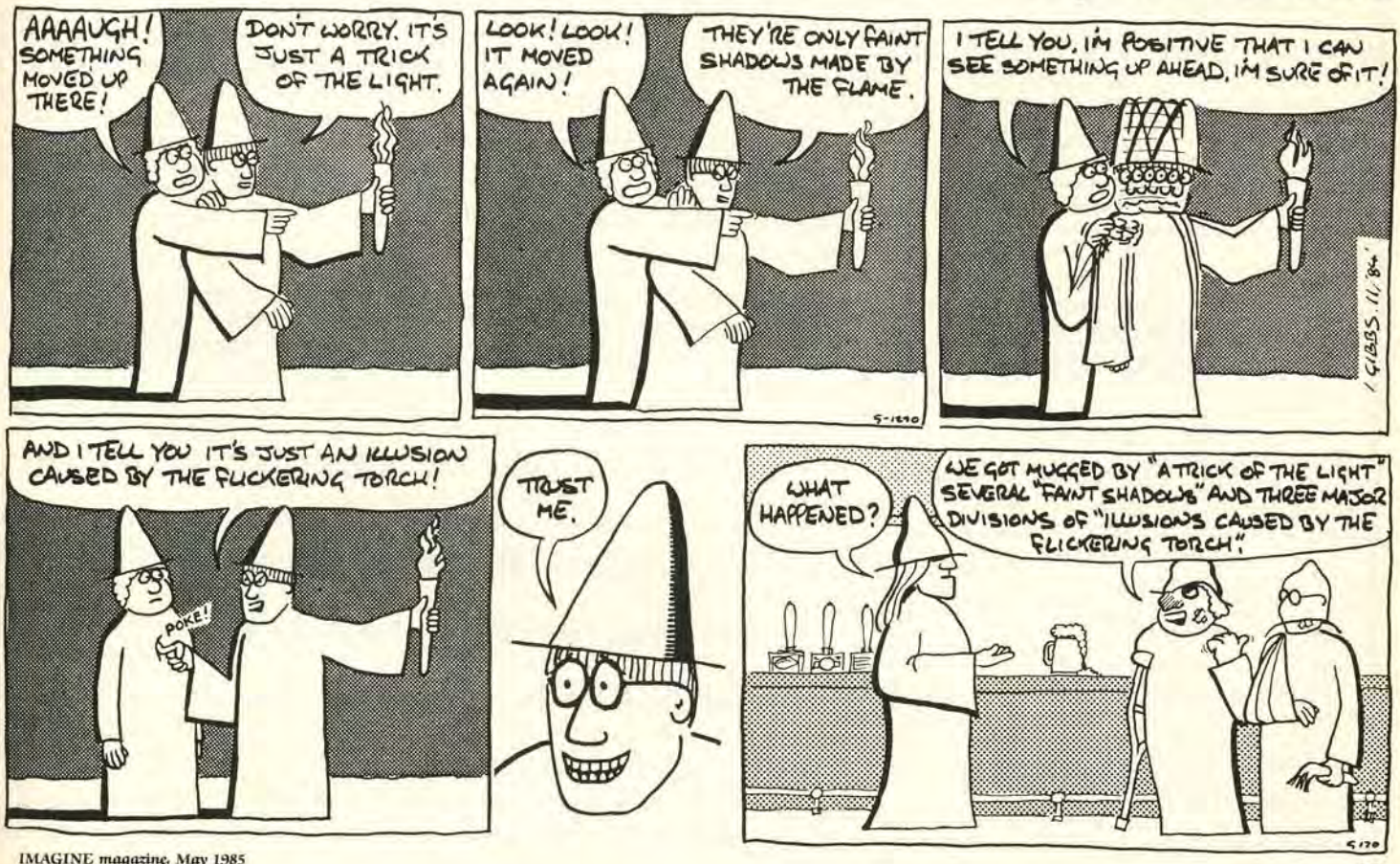
I wonder if my guesses are any closer than yours?

Who knows? The Cavalier, according to the first entry in our Shorter Oxford, is just a horse-soldier, although it does recognise him also as a courtly gentleman. I'm not saying that we have any more idea of what the new classes will be than anybody else, but I think looking up names in a dictionary might be a dangerous way to try and predict them. I hope we have some news soon.

Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

VOP

by Ian Gibbs


AAAAUGH! SOMETHING MOVED UP THERE!
DON'T WORRY. IT'S JUST A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.
LOOK! LOOK! IT MOVED AGAIN!
THEY'RE ONLY FAINT SHADOWS MADE BY THE FLAME.
I TELL YOU, I'M POSITIVE THAT I CAN SEE SOMETHING UP AHEAD, I'M SURE OF IT!
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POKE!
TRUST ME.
WHAT HAPPENED?
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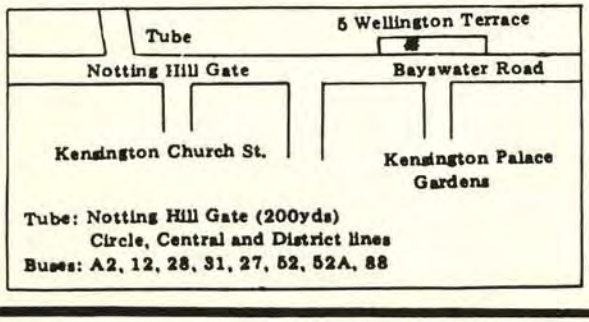

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When they said Tolkien's map of the Mountains of Mordor didn't make geological sense, he replied that he knew, but needed them thus for the plot!

Whichever sort of wilderness campaign you favour running, the open-ended sort where the players roam at will, or the controlled adventure type where a specific adventure is planned in advance by the DM, there is one thing you will certainly need — maps. And probably quite a few. For one thing, you will obviously need maps of the area the players are actually in the process of exploring. Perhaps you will have one showing an area about 30x30 miles over which the players will do most of their travelling, plus several more at a bigger scale to show specific areas in more detail — a particular enchanted grove that the players will be led to, or a ruined village they will have to investigate at some time.

But you will also need a smaller scale map showing a much larger area — the continent in which the campaign is situated, or even the whole world. There are two reasons why it is important to have such a map: firstly, as the omniscient DM, you ought to know about such things as what lands lie to the north, south, east and west. The players may ask NPCs about such subjects, or foreign NPCs from far-off lands may turn up, and the DM will need these details to hand. Indeed, the more details can be given, the better the atmosphere created for the campaign. Secondly, at some point in the proceedings, the players may actually start travelling further than the DM intended, who may suddenly need to know about lands off-map because the players are there! However, there are some other ways to forestall the problem, which I shall discuss shortly.

As to contructing a wilderness map, there are three options — make one, buy one, or nick one! With regard to the first, there are some people who love nothing better than to draw imaginary maps, and will happily spend hours scribbling away at islands and rivers and cities. I speak from personal experience, being just such a one. But I'm aware that some find a blank sheet of paper rather more intractable, and if you do find your mind goes blank as soon as you try to design a fjord, fear not, for there are remedies at hand.

One, as I said, is to buy a ready-made wilderness map. There are quite a number of serviceable ones on the market, including maps of Middle Earth, the Harnica map (which is expensive, but pretty), and possibly there are still copies of the old SPI Frontiers of Alusia map floating around. If you do buy a commercial map, you will of course have to put up with the fact that your players may have copies of the same map, and therefore know more than they ought, but this is less of a problem than when players have already seen a commercial module that you want to run.

There is a useful in-between option, which is to take some other map, and adapt it to your purposes. For instance, there are plenty of fantasy maps published in one book or another, and with a little renaming of names, and an extra island here or an extra river there, players may well be quite oblivious of the fact that they are in fact adventuring over a map of Narnia. A useful source of inspiration is the book *An Atlas of Fantasy* by J B Post, which is well worth tracking down.

Nor is there any reason why you should use only fantasy maps. A good wheeze is to look out for old Ordnance Survey maps of Colinsay or Dolgelley or somewhere, then rename all the villages and start marking in the special features like dragon's lairs, nixie pools and so on. Before long, you have a very creditable wilderness map. The advantage of this is that you also get geographically reasonable terrain. If you design the map entirely yourself, there is always the danger of a smart-aleck player pointing out that you've done something silly like have a river start in a desert, or a mountain range ending in a bay. When Tolkien was taxed with the fact that the Mountains of Mordor didn't make geological sense, he replied that he knew that, but he needed them that way for the plot, and in any case, they were formed by gods kicking the world about, not by normal geological processes. This is a perfectly reasonable defence, but I myself prefer to have things geologically right, all the same.

Unless you are very well prepared, though, it is still quite likely that at some point the players are going to try and venture off the edge of your mapped area. There are various ways of overcoming this.

One is to encourage the party to move along roads and trails. As soon as they start moving off the beaten track, unpleasant things start to happen — plants start winding round their ankles, etc. This keeps characters to recognised ways in the same way as corridors control their movements in a dungeon. And of course, if no paths lead off the map, you've no problem.

A similar trick is to scare characters in the other direction as soon as they are about to leave the map — a sudden posse of ogres appears and chases the party a convenient distance.

And another option is to make sure the edge of your mapped area coincides with some impassable feature — a river gorge, or cliffs. Try and be subtle with this; if the players notice that they're boxed in by suspiciously rectalinear obstacles, they may start making sniffing noises.

But if you are feeling really ingenious, you might like to try making up some geomorphic' maps — several sheets of map which will fit together any way you care to join them. The trick is to make sure the terrain always matches at the edges. Then if the party walks off the edge of one map, you bring them on to any sheet not currently in use, and re-use individual sheets as often as you need. As long as you remember which sheet came when, and whereabouts unique features (like castles) are, you can generate infinite terrain in any direction! Sneaky, eh?

Roger Musson

The Space Where The Amateur Press Tells The Professionals Where They're Going Wrong

SOAPBOX

This month's contributor: MIKE LEWIS

Remember Yesterday?

Every time a new fanzine arrives to be reviewed for IMAGINE™ magazine, I approach it with some trepidation. This is not because I think the contents will be terrible, although they often are; it is more a feeling of *déja vu*. I realise that many new fanzine editors have had very little contact with the fanzines that came before them, and the traditions that they are following, so their own material strikes them as fresh and original. Sadly, this is seldom the case.

There seems to be a strange, and no doubt very scientific, law operating in fanzine circles, which states that there will be a new version of the AD&D® game Archer character class produced each year, as well as yet another Vorpal Bunny, each version arising in the same ignorance of what has been produced before. Newcomers to fandom will probably gain from these articles: the material is as new to them as to the people who have produced it, yet it seems a tragic waste of talent to reproduce the same articles and concepts in a continuous cycle.

Paul Mason in his fanzine, Imazine, has recently suggested that some attempt should be made to preserve 'fan thought', as the hobby is now ten years old, and few people remember the zines of two years ago, let alone ten. He has proposed a booklet, intended to be an introduction to the ideas and discoveries of fandom as a whole over the last ten years, which will help new editors and fans avoid repeating previous ideas and mistakes. Graham Staplehurst has also endeavoured to produce an introductory guide to rpg fandom, which will initiate the newcomer into some of its mysteries. I hope these ideas do produce some results; it would be a shame to see the good material which has been produced disappear without a trace.

Yet, I wonder if the concept of just preserving 'fan thought' is a little narrow — the field of frp gaming has a lot to offer as a whole. The major additions to and innovations in role-playing games do not take the form of new rulebooks, they occur in magazine articles, all forms of magazines from fanzines to prozines. By their very nature, magazines are transitory, each new issue being replaced by the next at the end of the month. Because of this temporary nature of magazines, much of the material is lost, perhaps to be repeated a few years or even months later in another magazine. Shouldn't some attempt be made to preserve the best material to prevent needless repetition or the loss of genuinely innovative ideas?

I accept that most fans consider role-playing games to be simply a fun hobby, and are not concerned with new rules or playing styles. Fine, but there are others who take the games more seriously, who consider them, if not an artform, then a valid form of creativity. These are the people who would benefit most from the preservation of new ideas and concepts. It would provide them with a foundation to develop role-playing even further. I think there are new ideas to be created within the roleplaying genre, ideas which are as genuinely new and exciting as RQ or C&S were when they first appeared. But, these ideas will not appear without the already created styles of play to draw upon.

Once you have accepted that rpg ideas should be preserved, you then have the problem of what material to consider. Are new monsters and character classes genuinely innovations, or are they just rehashes of tired old game concepts which offer little new and interesting? The answer depends on your point of view, yet they are things which are repeatedly created afresh each year, so someone must want them. If all the best monsters and classes could be collected together and published, would it finally saturate the market and make people turn their creativity to areas which, to my mind, are more useful and interesting? If you consider game styles and new systems worth preserving, which do you keep, and which reject? What will future gamers want from such a collection of a decade of rpg material? Surely more than another monster to populate their dungeon.

The very expression 'best' will create problems simply because it is so subjective. Paul Mason acknowledges that any Fan material to be preserved will have to contain material which is currently unfashionable within fandom, and at odds with the compiler's own views. Otherwise, the collection is not a representation of all the last decade's additions to the field of rpgs, merely a reflection of one facet.

I have to admit that I doubt such a collection of material could be compiled, or produced in a long-term, endurable book format. The book publishers seem to have steered clear of the frp market, preferring to publish **Fighting Fantasy** style books, rather than genuine frp material. Yet you only have to scan the shelves of any bookshop which carries hobby books to realise that the wargames hobby — surely a much smaller market area than frp gamers, especially nowadays — supports large numbers of wargaming books, many of which are very general in nature. Why can't the frp market support the same?

While you may feel that all this talk of preserving old material is rubbish, and you are better with new games and new rulebooks, just give it a thought, as you open a magazine and see the Archer character class once more!

Mike Lewis

Press Cuttings

I suppose it is just another indication of the power of Murphy's Law, that in the month I decide to devote a lot of space to postal zines and postal gaming, I get hardly any; and a torrent of new frp zines. Ah well, no-one ever said that this job was easy. The imbalance in the zines received is the reason for postponing the detailed postal gaming coverage this time, but the next column will tell you what to do with those stamps and envelopes I know all of you have bought in readiness.

This time of year is usually a quiet one for new zines; they usually appear in the summer when the editors have the spare time (and cash) to bring out that first issue. Either we've had a heatwave I didn't notice, or some people just ignore the old traditions; whatever the reason, I've got five zines new to this column this issue.

The first of these is **IVORY TOWER**, which has the distinction (?) of being almost totally handwritten! Admittedly, the writing is printed, not joined up, so it is fairly readable. The zine is obviously aiming to produce useful material rather than chat, as it contains scenarios, and encounter tables for **RQ, AD&D®** and **Stormbringer** games. The standard of writing is reasonable, and Ivory Tower is definitely worth watching out for — if only to see when they get a typewriter!

BURNING RUBBER 1 is the official **Juggernaut** fanzine, or so the cover of issue one informs me. Juggernaut is an alternative to **Car Wars**, to be published by RuneRelic Enterprises later this year, and Burning Rubber contains rules and scenarios for use with the game. Quite what the point is in releasing a fanzine for an as yet unreleased game, I'm not sure! RRE tell me they plan to release several more fanzines throughout the next year; I just hope they release the pertinent games first.

THE ROLEPLAYING KARMA SUTRA is the unlikely title of another first issue. It is rather scruffy and badly laid out, but interesting to read as the articles are linked by short pieces of chat covering just about everything. If they can survive the terrible name (after all, **Tempestuous Orifice** did!), and sort the zine out a little, I think they'll make a very welcome new magazine.

The **CHAOS LORD** is another new zine from Caldercomix, who produce **Impact**, a comics zine, already. They readily admit in their advert for Impact that it is produced by 10-15 year olds for the same audience, and I would say that the same is true of Chaos Lord. The zine models itself rather too closely on **White Dwarf** for my liking, with a similar style news page, a Laserburn page, a reviews corner and a Cthulhu page promised next issue. It is one way to organise a zine, I agree, but it causes stagnation, with the same layout and feel to each issue. The best article in the issue converts the characters from Warrior's excellent MarvelMan series to Villains and Vigilantes. Overall, not very impressive, but if you are part of the intended audience range, then a good zine to get involved with.

New to these pages, though already on issue 2 is **COMBAT IS GLORY**, an **AD&D®** fanzine. It concentrates on AD&D alone, and includes scenarios, new monsters and character classes (including the Saint!) as well as reviews and news. The material is of reasonable quality, and if you are looking for a source of new AD&D monsters, character classes, etc, then it is good value for money.

Issue one of **BLOOD, GUTS AND BEER** didn't impress me particularly, with its fanatic devotion to RQ, a sparse content; so I am happy to report than issue 3 is far better. The zine's appearance is greatly improved, as is the

content, with a system-free, Egyptian-based scenario, RQ runes, and plenty of chat and letters. **PROTOPLASM 2** has now appeared, still with slightly distasteful material. Issue one had SAS vs Iranian terrorists, this issue has rules for playing Riots... There are articles on the police in **Traveller**, and interesting Cthulhu and **Daredevils** scenario and a large section on the Sea in RQ to make up for this, though. **DEAD ELF 3** continues to offer a friendly and interesting zine, with articles on **Asterix**, an RQ scenario and plenty of reviews and letters.

NORST CLAW is another third issue, and yet another from a games company about to release a new game. It contains material for AD&D, **Star Frontiers**® and some fairly atrocious fiction. For some reason, the whole attitude and feeling about the zine annoys me — it is really an average fanzine, yet the editors spend much of the magazine pushing their own games company and acting as though they were White Dwarf or **IMAGINE**. One fanzine which doesn't take itself too seriously, and which does deliver good quality material is **DAGON**, and issue 6 is no exception. As ever, the theme is **Call of Cthulhu**, and articles cover the Cthulhu Mythos Hierarchy, a new race of monsters, and Abduction in Arkham, an excellent scenario.

Another zine which always provides something interesting is Paul Mason's **IMAZINE**, and issue 9 carries on with the tradition. Paul writes extremely clearly and intelligently on a lot of issues, such as preserving fan-thought (see this issue's **Soapbox** for similar views), anarchy, his new campaign and role-playing campaigns in general. If you want more from a games fanzine than new monsters and magic items, but prefer intelligent discussion, then look no further than Imazine.

Looking at the few postal zines which have made their way through, the most interesting ones are the chat-based zines. I find it extremely tedious to read just games reports, as I'm sure most people do. Fortunately not all zines are games-report biased, and many have very few games! One such is **FIRST EXCURSION** from Graham Staplehurst, a replacement for his old **Twiqu**, which had reached the allotted 12 issues. The new zine is really only Twiqu under a new name, and Graham continues to chat about things which interest him, and to offer new games ideas. The centre piece of this issue being the cards for a Silmarillion version of **Illuminati**!

In the past, I have been rather unflattering with my comments regarding Denis Jones' **FIVE YEAR PLAN** (F-Plan) zine, which offers postal gaming and chat. The latest isue, entitled **Dreamtime**, is a surprising improvement on previous issues. Denis' writing style still lacks some of the basics, but he is clearly working on it, and this issue is a very pleasant and interesting read, with pieces on **Bunnies and Burrows**, music and books, plus a Music Biz game and postal **Call My Bluff** running!

PRISONERS OF WAR is the second issue of the renamed **Psychopath**, and it weighs in at a hefty 52 pages! There are articles on the Sinclair C5 (though without the practical experience I've had and would hesitate to repeat!), music, letters and the Superbowl. Add to that pages and pages of games, and you've got a very packed, value for money, zine.

That's it for this issue: all zines received are mentioned in the address below, even if they haven't been reviewed in the main column.

Mike Lewis

Contact Addresses

BLOOD, GUTS & BEER, Barry Atkins, 3 Pembroke Crescent, Hove, Sussex BN3 5DH (50p); **BOLT FROM THE BLUE**, Ken Bain, 2 Albert St, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Notts NG12 2FL (45p); **BURNING RUBBER**, Runerelic Enterprises, 186 Dunraven Drive, Derriford, Plymouth, Devon PL6 6AZ (30p); **CHAOS LORD**, Caldercomix, 4 Upper Gaukroger, Sowerby New Rd, Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, W Yorks (50p); **COMBAT IS GLORY**, Andrew Thompson, 55 Parallels Rd, Archway, London N19 3RE (50p); **DAGON**, Carl Ford, 11 Warwick Rd, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 6SW (80p); **DEAD ELF**, Andrew Fisher, 2 The Limes, Hitchin, Herts (45p); **DEMONS DRAWL**, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4QH (55p); **FANTASY ADVERTISER**, Martin Skidmore, 25 Cornleaze, Withywood, Bristol (50p); **FIRST EXCURSION**, Graham Staplehurst, 62 Church Rd, Harlesden, London NW10 (?); **F-PLAN**, Denis Jones, 22 Beechhill Road, Eltham, London SE9 1HH (45p); **GREATEST HITS**, Pete Birks, 65 Turney Rd, London SE21 7JB (50p); **IMAZINE**, Paul Mason, Room J51, Kirby Lodge, Rootes Residences, Univ of Warwick, Coventry (50p); **IVORY TOWER**, 61 Swaledale Ave, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 9AR (40p); **JAWZ**, Alex Zbyslaw, B45 Allesley House, Rootes Residences, Univ of Warwick (35p); **LANKHMAR STAR DAILY**, Robert Nott, 158 Pendeen Park, Helston, Cornwall (60p); **MOUSE POLICE**, Rob Wilson, Penryn, 4 Campion Rd, Leamington Spa, Warks CV32 5XC (40p); **NORST CLAW**, Peter North, 29 Latchford Rd, Heswall, Wirral L60 3RN (45p); **OBSCURITY INC**, Tony Keen, Kitchener House, 6 Gordon Terrace, Edinburgh EH16 5QH (60p); **OINK!**, Dave Messenger, 3 The Leasow, Aldridge, Walsall, W Midlands WS9 0EF (40p); **PRISONERS OF WAR**, Wallace Nicoll, 228 Kinell Avenue, Cardonald, Glasgow G52 3RU (60p); **PROTOPLASM**, 20 Victoria Rd, Rathgar, Dublin 6 (60p); **RPG KARMA SUTRA**, Dave Webster, 455 Loughborough Rd, Birstall, Leics (52p); **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, Trevor Mendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1PH (4 for £1); **SPREADSHEET**: 1 Glenfield Road, Stockport SK4 2QP (?); **TTYF**, John Harrington, 13 Beechwood Gardens, Rainham, Essex (35p)

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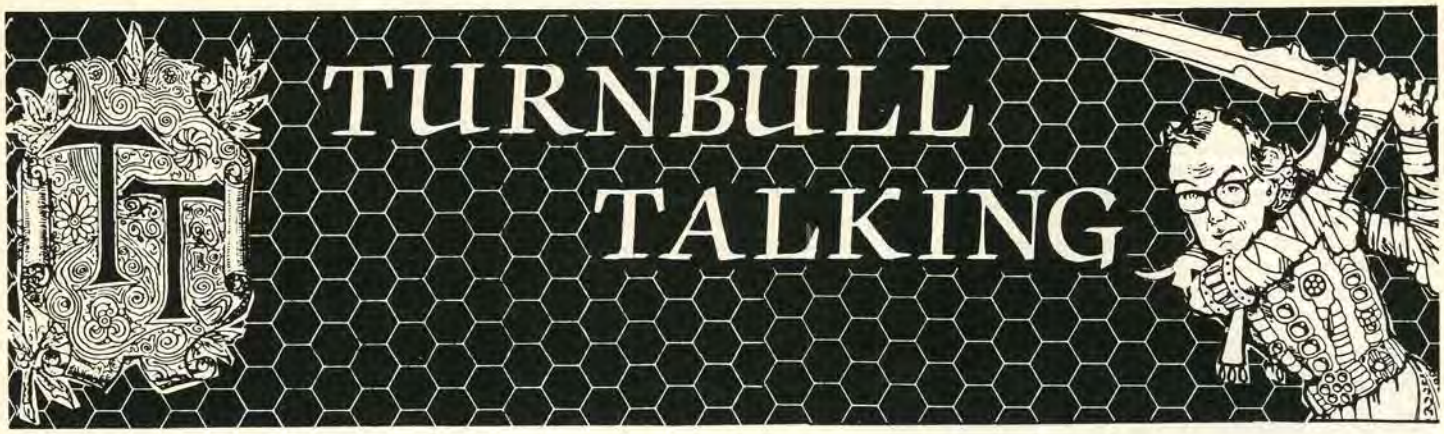


The publisher offers advice, in the light of experience, on the art of good DMing

Modules (or rather their classification system) came in for a bit of a slating last time, so let's have a look now at the brighter side — how to get the best out of them. This is not a 'one true way' exposition, nor does it pretend to tell you how to be a good DM; instead it focuses on certain basic principles, learned by bitter experience (ie, not doing it properly) about running a module well.

The first is simply this: **read** it beforehand. It sounds obvious, but more than one DM to my knowledge has run a module with only scanty knowledge of the plot, hoping to pick it up as it went along. At best, this can end up as a rather incoherent adventure for the players; at worst, it can be a complete disaster if the DM misses something critical. Adopting the 'play it by ear' approach is not only pretty arrogant, but it also pays disservice to the designer. Consider: whoever wrote the module wanted it to be unique — a classic — and probably spent many hours getting the thread of the plot balanced, yet tortuous. The module wouldn't be there in the first place if the publishers didn't think, with the benefit of their experience, that they could offer something different. TSR could have published dozens of modules set in pyramids, for instance.

Furthermore, your players have the right to be entertained, for such is the function of the good DM — but the conductor who decides to present an extempore classical concert with full orchestra should expect the rotten eggs and squashy fruit.

Of course, simply reading it is not enough. This is also the time of rather more active preparation. Get to know the plot and particularly any awkward or subtle twists in it. On the one hand, the better you know the plot, the easier it is to portray the NPCs properly — supplying the hints in just the right doses, or whatever, is their key function in some modules. On the other hand, the twists in the plot are crucial — present them wrongly and you could end up giving the players information on a plate which should by rights have required a lot of work to obtain, or at the other extreme, the PCs could spend the entire adventure on a wild-goose chase, getting nowhere. This might be satisfying for the sadistic DM, but it's not so hot on the entertainment rating.

At this stage, it is pretty common for DMs to make notes on side paper, in their Adventure Logs, or even in the module booklet. A highlighting pen is a useful device for drawing to your attention, in play, a particularly important bit of information or storyline. Like a jury, told to disregard a point made in a courtroom because the judge rules it out of order, the players won't forget if you give them some information you shouldn't have, and you can't blame them for acting on it. So make notes — no-one is perfect, and the good DM is usually a busy person while the adventure is going on.

While you're at it, include in those notes statistics of monsters which may be encountered. The better modules have this all worked out already, but otherwise pre-roll their hit points (and leave some space to reduce them progressively as the monster gets clobbered), note the die roll they need to hit a convenient Armour Class, and the damage they do. Note the details of their special attacks and defences, and make a plan of attack for them. This is the time when you can help yourself out; there's nothing more annoying to players than the game stopping while the DM hunts out an elusive piece of information.

I've been asked a number of times how useful a microcomputer is to a DM, both for preparing material and during play. I've had mixed experiences here. Mervyn Simon, when he used to run excellent scenarios at Games Day, had his set in order; the flow of play was smooth and the information accurate. More often, though, I've seen the opposite — players sitting around getting bored while the DM goes through a convoluted routine to determine whether an attack was successful, a blow was fatal, or whatever. This, taken in conjunction with the fact that the DM is often short of space for all the reference material needed, leads me to believe that a micro can be of marginal benefit only, and more often than not is an unnecessary encumbrance.

No doubt there are those who disagree — let's hear your views and experiences.

Incidentally, I do recommend DMs to use the Adventure Log, or some other similar device, to keep a permanent record. Likewise, I recommend players to use the Permanent Player Character Folder and Adventure Records. It's fascinating, from both viewpoints, to be able to look back at an adventure years afterwards and recall its moments of danger, puzzlement, triumph and downright slapstick. Most adventures contain funny incidents, in particular, which are worth recording.

Two final points about the course of play itself. First, though I don't suggest wholesale restructuring of the whole module, don't treat its every word as the Tablets from Mount Sinai. If your players are particularly bright, and you see that they are going to get through to a key piece of information much faster than the designer expected, there's nothing wrong in fiddling things a bit. Conversely, if they are being particularly stupid, and missing what, to the designer, was intended to be obvious, you may have to ease up on them somewhat. It's all a question of balance — and only the DM can judge that.

Lastly, don't forget the Cardinal Rule — you are the one who must make sure the players are **entertained**. Frighten the pants off them, confuse them, baffle them, elate and depress them, but above everything else, entertain them. Make it too easy or dull, or both, and they'll get bored. Make it too hard, and they'll get dispirited. Make them work hard for their success, to be sure, but reward their work with at least some success, and reward bad play with some pretty drastic (though maybe not fatal) consequences. You are not there to kill them, nor to let them walk away loaded with loot they haven't earned. You are there for balance and to provide an adventure that rates on a par with other entertainment. If they enjoy it, you will do too, and in the end that's what it's all about.

Good moduling!

Don Turnbull

PHALANX

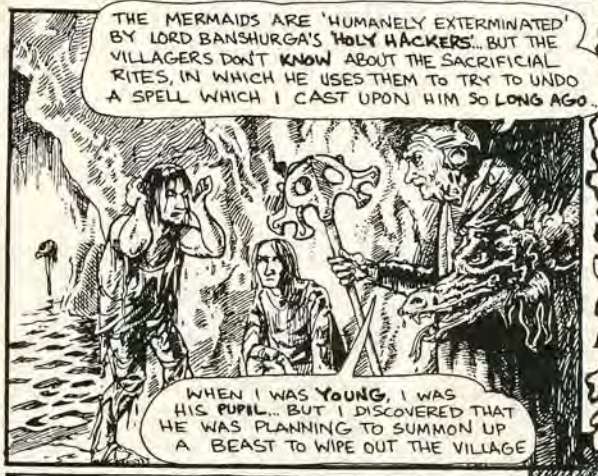
by R. Grenville-Evans

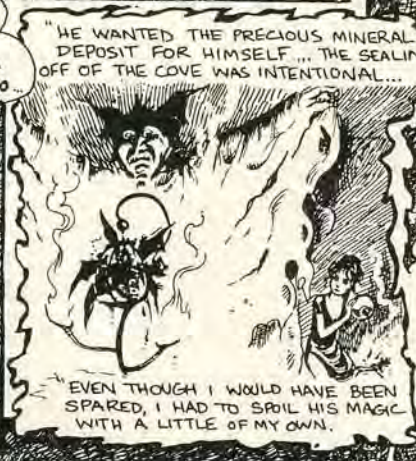
CHUNK THE TENTH: CEREMONY OF EVIL

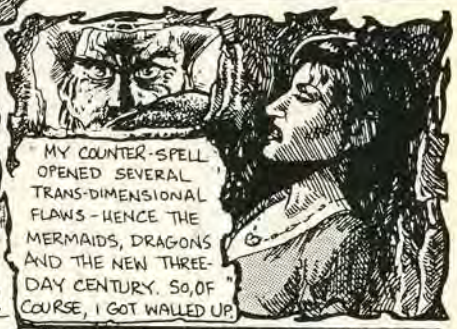
HAVING DEFEATED THE KILLER-PUPPETS, BY SITTING ON THE WINDPIPE OF THEIR OPERATER, THE VICIOUS GNOME, STYNCH, AND THEREBY SAVING THE SKIN OF OGRYN, THE YOUTHFUL OTHRUNU RIDES BACK TO HER RIGHTFUL PLACE AND TIME. WAS IT HER WHO APPEARED, IN AGED FORM, TO OUR HEROES.... AND DID THIS VISITATION GIVE WEASEL THE POWER TO HYPNOTIZE?

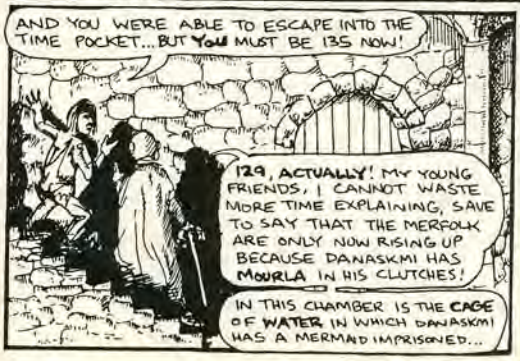
HERE WE GO AGAIN.. HEY, WEAS, WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THAT GESTURE YOU MADE TO OLD STYNCH?
GESTURE? I DIDN'T! YOU IMAGINE THINGS, YOU DO!

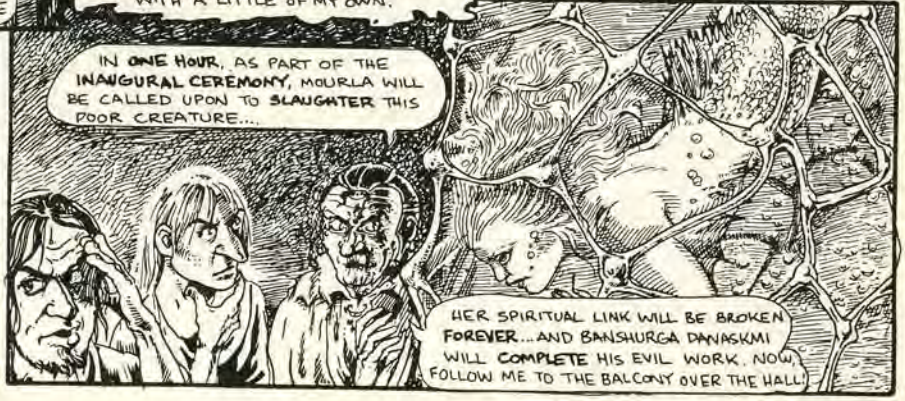
IT WAS HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE SEA. THE MERFOLK HAVE NOW RISEN UP TO DO BATTLE WITH DANASKMI!
OTHRUNU!!
WHY DIDN'T THEY DO SO BEFORE NOW?


THE MERMAIDS ARE 'HUMANELY EXTERMINATED' BY LORD BANSHURGA'S 'HOLY HACKERS'... BUT THE VILLAGERS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE SACRIFICIAL RITES, IN WHICH HE USES THEM TO TRY TO UNDO A SPELL WHICH I CAST UPON HIM SO LONG AGO...
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS HIS PUPIL... BUT I DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS PLANNING TO SUMMON UP A BEAST TO WIPE OUT THE VILLAGE


"HE WANTED THE PRECIOUS MINERAL DEPOSIT FOR HIMSELF ... THE SEALING OFF OF THE COVE WAS INTENTIONAL...
"EVEN THOUGH I WOULD HAVE BEEN SPARED, I HAD TO SPOIL HIS MAGIC WITH A LITTLE OF MY OWN.


MY COUNTER-SPELL OPENED SEVERAL TRANS-DIMENSIONAL FLAWS – HENCE THE MERMAIDS, DRAGONS AND THE NEW THREE-DAY CENTURY. SO, OF COURSE, I GOT WALLED UP.


AND YOU WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE INTO THE TIME POCKET... BUT YOU MUST BE 135 NOW!
129, ACTUALLY! MY YOUNG FRIENDS, I CANNOT WASTE MORE TIME EXPLAINING, SAVE TO SAY THAT THE MERFOLK ARE ONLY NOW RISING UP BECAUSE DANASKMI HAS MOURLA IN HIS CLUTCHES!
IN THIS CHAMBER IS THE CAGE OF WATER IN WHICH DANASKMI HAS A MERMAID IMPRISONED...


IN ONE HOUR, AS PART OF THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY, MOURLA WILL BE CALLED UPON TO SLAUGHTER THIS POOR CREATURE...
HER SPIRITUAL LINK WILL BE BROKEN FOREVER... AND BANSHURGA DANASKMI WILL COMPLETE HIS EVIL WORK. NOW, FOLLOW ME TO THE BALCONY OVER THE HALL!

YOU MUST DISGUISE YOURSELVES AND BE PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY. SSS! ALLOW THESE MENIALS TO PREPARE THE CHAMBER, THEN TAKE THEIR PLACE... BUT WAIT FOR MY INSTRUCTIONS!
WE'VE GOT HARF A MILE TO WICH THIS PLACE NITS SHARPS, OR WE'LL GOT IT FROM LORD BAHAMAR
I REALLY HATES BEIN A MINION
WE PROMISE TO THIS TIME, OTHRUNU!
WE WILL SOON BE AIDED BY THE OTHERS, BUT MOURLA WILL BE UNABLE TO SEE YOU, SO DO NOT CALL OUT TO HER...
WE WON'T.
WHEN ALL APPEARS TO BE IN READINESS, OGRYN AND WEASEL POUNCE....
URRNPH! I'LL BE GLAD TO-OUGH- GET A-AAHN-CLEAN CLOAK-AWAGH-AROUND ME...
SMEK
DUNNO ABOUT-OOK-CLEAN! YURKH--THIS BUSTER HASN'T WASHED HIS IN AGES-OOOGPHH!!
LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED ANY HELP OVER THERE!
NO THANKS
NYYAUGH
STROMP FLROMPH
YES PLEASE
I THINK I LOOK QUITE GOOD IN THIS.
AYE, CAPTIVATING - COME, LET'S KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR THE JOLLY BROTHERHOOD!
MEANWHILE, IN THE VILLAGE...
DO NOT FRET FOR THE VISITORS, DEAR HORKIN - THEY DOUBTLESS HATE FAREWELLS AND VENTURED OFF INTO THE NIGHT... LIKE ALL THE REST!
BUT IT'S OUR DRAGONS, TOO, MY LORD ... EDGOR HAS RETURNED... NOW THEY SEEM TO BE ALL... MIGRATING!!
SEE! AND THERE GOES MY WIFE! DIVINA! DIVINA!!
GERTOW!
DO NOT WORRY, HORKIN. COME AND VIEW THE CEREMONY. THE DRAGONS WILL RETURN!
THIS IS DISTURBING! I MUST HASTEN THE CEREMONY AND REVOKE THE SPELL... CURSE THEM!
FROM A TURRET, OGRYN AND WEASEL VIEW THE FLOCK...
NO, I DIDN'T SEE WHERE THE DRAGONS WENT... BUT LOOK A THIS TURN-OUT!
LET'S GO DOWNSTAIRS AND MINGLE WITH 'EM!
IT'S DANASKMI... AND MOURLA! SHE'S IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE... WHAT IS OTHRUNU'S PLAN? WHO ARE THE "OTHERS"?
I WONDER WHERE THE SWORD WENT?
OUT OF THE WATER-CAGE, THE MERMAID'S LIFE IS SLIPPING SLOWLY AWAY. THE 'RITUAL' IS PERFORMED WITHOUT DETOUR...
...WITH THIS KNIFE, I SEVER THE OCEAN WEEDS THAT BIND MY SOUL
"... AND SO I PLEDGE MY SOUL TO THEE"
AND SO I PLEDGE MY SOUL TO THEE....
NEXT TIME: TRANSMOGRIFICATION!!!

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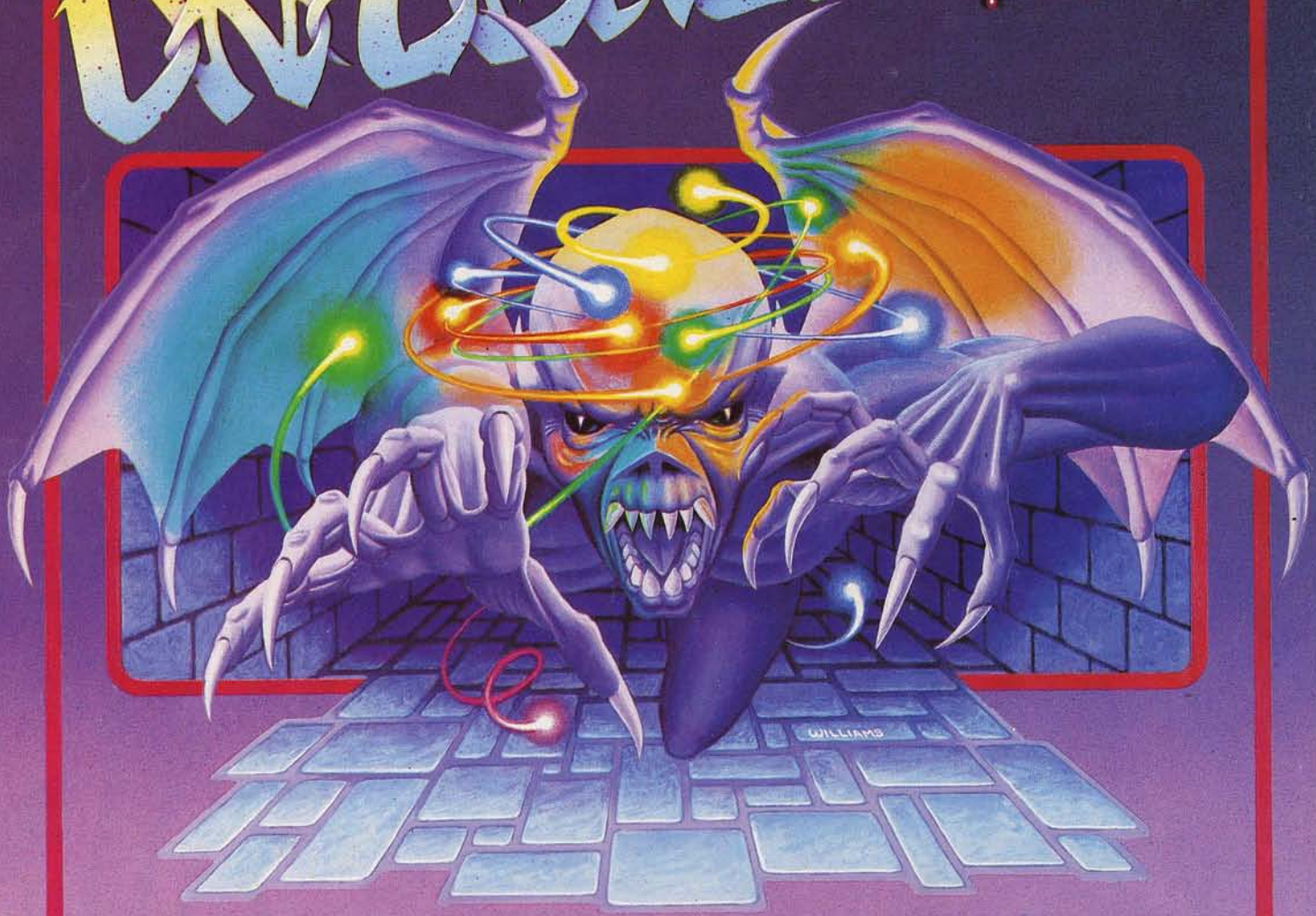
UNLEASHED



UK4 WHEN A STAR FALLS

by Graeme Morris

Hurled like a blazing spear from the night sky, the shooting-star would shape the fates of many — so it was written. The adventurers have the chance to reforge destiny. There is everything to gain.... or to lose.... when a star falls.

***When A Star Falls** is an AD&D® Adventure for 6-10 characters of levels 3-5.*

UK5 EYE OF THE SERPENT

by Graeme Morris

Gazing down from the pinnacle of Hardway Mountain, who would not be drawn by the far-off glint of the Serpent's Eye? The descent will be hard, for the mountain knows neither mercy nor compassion.

***Eye Of The Serpent** is a one-on-one, first level, AD&D adventure, which can also be used for a party of 4-6 characters.*

UK6 ALL THAT GLITTERS...

by Jim Bambra

Ahead the river breaks into white water; these must be the rapids marked on your mysterious parchment. Idly, your thoughts drift to the treasures promised at the journey's end. Only the bravest will live to discover that all that glitters is not gold, but much, much more!

An AD&D Adventure for 5-8 characters of levels 5-7.

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